LECTURES

ON

POLITICAL ATHEISM.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE Lectures in this volume, dedicated to the working-men of our nation, were commenced in Boston, enlarged in Cincinnati, and revised and fitted for the press in Boston, with such additions as harmonise with and consummate their general design. And having done, all things considered, as well as I could, I commend the volume to my countrymen without apology, or deprecation of criticism, or plea for candour or mercy. Having exercised my own right in thinking and publication, I cheerfully accord to my readers their right of dissent and criticism, only praying that, in the hand of the Spirit, it may answer the purpose intended, of correcting destructive errors, and extending the illumination of truths essential to salvation.

It is not the object of these Lectures to exhaust the subjects on which they treat, but rather with conciseness and perspicuity so to state and defend their elementary principles in an epitomised form, that they may be understood rather than lost in the accumulating perplexities of words.

Most sincerely, and with deep interest and many prayers, I have written these Lectures, and now commend them to the providence of God.

I have long been urgently requested by many to prepare my works for the press, with a concise history of my life and times. It has been for many years my desire to do this, and for urgent reasons. I am sensible that the fifty years of my active life have been years of unparalleled

interest, and of rapid, terrible, and glorious results—the commencement of the punishment of the anti-Christian powers, with reference to the predicted victories of the Church in the evangelisation of the world.

It was in the view of such predictions and providential indications that I early consecrated my powers and time to Christ with reference to these opening scenes, relying entirely on his promised care of myself and mine; and though these engagements have been imperfectly fulfilled on my part, his promises to me have been most faithfully performed.

As the consequence of these resolutions, I have never laid out far-reaching plans of my own, but awaited and observed the apparent fulfilments of prophecy and the developments of providence.

Of course, from the beginning of my public life, the Church of God, and my country and the world, as given to Christ, have been the field of my observation, interest, motives, prayers, and efforts. It is this early providential chart of my labours that has extended them beyond the common sphere of mere pastoral labour; for speedily I found myself harnessed to the chariot of Christ—whose wheels of fire have rolled onward, high and dreadful to his foes and glorious to his friends—giving to every demand, as I was able, its portion in due season. And hence, within the sphere above indicated, all my published and unpublished works and labours are comprehended.

In respect to their conception and execution, I may truly say that they are my own; for, though I have not neglected or despised creeds, or the writings of great and good men, I have always commenced my investigations of Christian doctrine, and Christian duties, and Christian experience, with the teachings and implications of the Bible, never expounding it by human creeds, but

all creeds and theologians by the Bible, considered as a system of moral government, legal and evangelical, in the hand of a Mediator, administered by his Word and Spirit over a world of rebel, free, and unaccountable subjects.

I am the more desirous of publishing my doctrinal expositions of the Bible, inasmuch as they have generally obviated the more common misapprehensions and misrepresentations which often attend the exposition of the Calvinistic system; and have been, in the hand of the Spirit, the means of whatever success it has pleased God to give to my labours in revivals of religion; and have extensively united the suffrage, I believe, of evangelical pastors and Churches, who supposed themselves more widely to differ from one another. It is this consideration which inspires the hope that, if misunderstood in parts, as sometimes they have been, their comprehensive and relative exhibition may contribute to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

I perceive, also, that the comprehensive field over which my vision, and prayers, and efforts have travelled has connected me with a large portion of the great events of the government of God; and yet such a history, seen from a single point of observation, and running through fifty years, may include facts and instructions, as part of the government of God, which might not otherwise be noted on the page of secular or ecclesiastical history; and which, great and significant as they may now appear, will, in coming ages, when their antiquity shall have magnified them, be eminently worthy of preservation, as exhibiting the image and body of the times; and stand forth the testimonials of a glorious progress in all the elements of the political and evangelical civilisation of the world—so great already that, should God in one

night blot out the results of the last fifty years, we should think we had opened our eyes upon the desolation that Goths and Vandals had swept over our land and world.

I do, therefore, exult and give thanks to God that, instead of the Gospel having made the experiment of reforming the world and failed, and leaving the task to a godless, licentious philosophy, the retrospect will show that my labours, with those of the evangelical pastors and Churches of my day, have not been in vain in the Lord, but have successfully advanced, and will, with accumulating progress and shock of battle, terminate in the glorious victories of the latter day.

These writings of my life, which may occupy some five or six volumes, will appear chiefly in chronological order, indicating the exigencies which occasioned them and their adaptation to the providential state of things at the time, and for the same purpose short explanatory notes may attend them.

It is impossible for me to state the specific contents of each volume. I can only say generally that they will contain my occasional published works—the theological system which I have preached and taught—a large selection of the sermons written and delivered amid revivals of religion, and found most efficacious—lectures on education and to young men—with a large amount of miscellaneous and, I suppose, important and interesting matter—to conclude with a history of my life and times.

The materials of these volumes, though not yet fitted exactly for the press, are thoroughly digested and well considered, as the result of frequent revisions; and in their order, plan, and definitions, and expositions are such as accord with my best judgment, and may easily and rapidly be fitted for the press and given to the public.

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&c. &c.

LECTURE I.

THE BEING OF A GOD.*

HISTORY teaches us that in all past time the earth has been owned, and knowledge and power have been monopolised, by the few; while the people, the labouring-classes, the great body of mankind, have been left to grope their way in darkness and slavery, tilling the earth they did not own, on the borders of starvation, and liable by a few days' sickness to become paupers. Some, supposing that this unequal condition was fostered by Christianity, have regarded it as the enemy of man. But, instead of this, all history teaches that degradation and oppression have existed in proportion as men have departed from the Bible, and that, in the same degree in which men have come under its influence, they came out from darkness and bondage to intelligence and Christian civilisation.

It is now three hundred years since commerce and the arts and sciences have exerted their powerful tendencies to equalise the condition of men, so that the many should not bear the burdens of life for the few. No nation has ever been placed in circumstances so favourable to the consummation of this experiment as ours; and though very much remains to be done, yet there is a wider diffu-

sion of intellectual culture and general intelligence among us than among any other people as to liberty and equality. And yet there is not a nation upon earth where the Bible has been so extensively circulated and so intelligently read, and has exerted so great a power in forming institutions and moral character, as in our own.

It might, therefore, as well be insisted that the sun is unfriendly to light, and that it is a cause of darkness, as that the Bible is unfriendly to civil and religious liberty.

By *liberty*, I do not mean *independence of law*, but *the right of self-government, by our own laws.* Freedom for everyone to do as he chooses, without regard to the rights of others, is *anarchy*, and not liberty.

By *equality*, I do not mean that each one should have the same amount of property as every other, nor that all should have the same calling. To demand this would be as if we should ask that the earth might be all hill, or all valley.

The most perfect state of civilisation includes innumerable parts, which no individual or family can supply, and which constitute innumerable honourable, useful, and indispensable vocations of society. There must be diversity of condition among men, so long as there are diversities of character and capacity, and different ends to be achieved, in civilised society. By *equality*, I *do* mean that all shall be equally protected in their rights, and have the opportunity to rise by industry and well-doing, according to their several abilities, and their honest, faithful action.

We have no despotic government, costing an hundredfold more than sufficient to sustain a republic. We have no landed aristocracy, no union of Church and State, and no sinecure priesthood. No minister can be forced upon his people, without their suffrage and voluntary

support. Each pastor stands upon his own character and deeds, without anything to break the force of his responsibility to his people; and is, in his calling, urged by as powerful motives and necessities as is the farmer or mechanic. Our soil is owned in fee simple by the cultivator, and our constitution and our laws are our own. They were made and are sustained and enjoyed by ourselves, and by all who chose to place themselves under them.

There never was a people of so much intelligence and enterprise, on such a luxuriant and boundless soil; and never, since earth was made, have men been let loose under the stimulus of such high hopes and the pressure of such high motive to successful action. We are a wonder to many, and a wonder to ourselves.

The nations of antiquity, as well as those of more modern days, have faltered and failed through the power of voluptuousness; wealth being chiefly in the hands of the aristocracy, the corruption descended through their veins, till the feeble nerve and degenerate spirit exposed them to conquest or revolution by barbarian or plebeian power. But, with us, having no entailed estates, what the improvident children of the rich scatter the children of the poor gather; while the enfeebled offspring of a voluptuous parentage go down to the labouring classes, and wait their turn to rise.

But as it is easier to amass wealth than to keep it, so it is easier to obtain liberty than to maintain it. How to perpetuate our institutions and liberties is a problem not yet, perhaps, entirely solved. Other republics have taken liberty by storm; but their light, like the meteor athwart the sky, has gone down in endless night. Shall it be so with us? Has our sun risen so full-orbed and clear only to make the darkness of his setting the more terrible? We believe no such thing; but rather that our light will shine

more and more to the perfect day, till earth's inhabitants, cheered by it and encouraged, shall burst their chains, and walk erect and free upon the fair earth which God has given them.

When at first we set up for independence, the priesthood and kings and nobles looked upon us with surprise and contempt. "What do these feeble Jews?" they said. "If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." Next, they pitied us. "Poor orphans," they said, "that have no kings, nor Church and State to take care of them!" And they doubted not that we should go back to three-legged stools and skins and acorns. But we have kept along for more than three-quarters of a century, and have had several skirmishes upon land and sea in defence of our liberties, and in that time have made considerable corn and wheat, and beef and pork, and some to spare—cotton also, and woollen cloths, and a few chairs, and knives and forks, and spoons, and farming utensils; and under the banner of God and liberty, we have faith to believe that we shall hold on, till the Gospel has done for all nations what it has done for us.

There are, it is true, some among us who are not willing to "let pretty well alone," and are anxious to try the experiment of making us *more* free and happy. They have discovered, they think, that there is no God; that the Bible is a fable, and civil government a usurpation of human rights; that separate families and separate property are a curse; that it is a vile monopoly for any man to have any wife in particular, or for a son to know and love his father; that modesty is an insult and persecution, and brass the inherent right of woman; that liberty is the right of every man to do as he pleases, and equality the right of every man to be as tall, and as strong, and handsome, and wise, and witty, as his neighbour; and to

dress as well, and enjoy as fine a house and equipage, and to eat and drink as much, by weight and measure, as his neighbour.

You remember, I suppose, the dog with a marrow-bone in his mouth, who swam the river, and, to grasp the shadow, lost the substance. And you, I trust, will not imitate his example, by giving up the greatest blessings ever bestowed by heaven, not for a shadow, but for the greatest sufferings that ever came upon a guilty nation. You will think it best, I doubt not, to wait until some other nation has made a more successful experiment on the principles of Atheism, before you abandon God and the Bible, and the civil and religious institutions of your country.

Atheism was the rod of God's anger, by which he overturned and dashed in pieces the governments and hierarchies of Europe, who took counsel against the Lord and his anointed.

But the wild power which destroyed thrones, and feudal systems, and ecclesiastical dominions in Europe would blow to atoms our republic, rulers, priests, and people, and introduce, first, anarchy intolerable, and then an everlasting despotism. It is for want of the Bible and the moral government of God in Europe, that liberty is struggling for life between revolutions, and anarchy, and despotisms; and when in our nation religion and liberty, constitutions and laws, shall be, by the people, identified with European despotisms, and regarded with hate, not kings and priests only, and temples and Sabbaths, will be swept away, but the whole generation would be involved in a vortex of fire and blood. "In that day shall kings, and great men, and rich men, and chief captains, and the mighty men, and every *bondman and every freeman*, hide themselves in dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

saying to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

But recently another generation of infidels has sprung up, confident that the experiment was not fairly made, and that the Church and the Gospel having failed, reason and philosophy are the last hope of man. And, for some time past, they have been turning their attention to the labouring-classes of our nation; since which I have trembled for my country. For I know that the heart and bones and sinews of liberty are with the labouring men of my country—the agriculturists, artisans, and all sorts of labourers. And I know that, unperverted, they will defend her institutions for ever.

But I know, too, who has carried among them lying sophistries and corrupting principles. And I have looked on and wept, and would fain have come to the rescue of this best and last hope of my country. For when you fail, the last citadel of liberty has been undermined and laid in ruins. And if ever I longed for the power of ubiquity, it was that I might stand by every labourer while the deceiver was poisoning his soul, and, with Ithuriel spear, compel that deceiver, Satan-like, to stand up in his own malignant, horrible, repellant character.

I have heard, on the other side, all, and more than all, which you have heard. And, after repeated and careful examinations, I do not hesitate to assure you that it can all be refuted; and has been, times without number. And if hard mental and physical action may constitute a working man, I hope to be admitted into your fraternity as a friend and counsellor. For, besides my own direct claims, all my American ancestors were farmers or artisans. My father was an athletic and hard-labouring man, intelligent,

patriotic, and well versed in history, geography, and the constitution of the United States, and was respected and beloved by his fellow-citizens, and, more than all, was a Christian.

I have good hope, therefore, that you will receive kindly this volume, which I dedicate to you, and that you will read it with candour and care, and impartial and earnest attention.

MORAL ATHEISM is the aversion of the heart to God and his government. It implies no impotency of intellect, but its perversion, by the obliquity of the heart. It is not the understanding which revolts against evidence, but the heart which revolts against holiness and moral obligation. The language of the heart consists in feeling; and to say in the heart "No God" is to wish there were none. This aversion to the existence of God springs, however, from no disinterested malignity to his being, provided it implied no law, accountability, guilt and danger.

It is against God as a moral governor, reigning over men by a law which is holy, and just, and good, that the heart of the fool makes insurrection. Its language is, No accountability, no fear, no restraint, no self-denial, no change of heart and life to escape perdition, and no reward or punishment in a future state according to deeds.

SPECULATIVE ATHEISM is the actual belief of what the heart thus desires. It is giving up the understanding to strong delusion, to believe a lie.

The first aberration of alienated mind before the Flood was manifested in licentiousness and violence; the second in idolatry—the worship by visible symbols of local divinities inhabiting the several departments of nature. The increase of philosophy united these scattered energies into one almighty mind, from which inferior minds were emanations, like sparks from heavenly bodies, to be in

due time absorbed again. Gradually, however, as animalism prevailed, and the darkness deepened, the intelligence and voluntary action of this great mind went out, and left only an unthinking, all-pervading energy, the soul of the world, and the *primum mobile* of all motion in the universe, according to the attributes and laws of self-existent and eternal nature.

This is Pantheism, which makes the world God, and God the world. It is the atheism which was in France the offspring of perverted Christianity; and it is substantially the form which the infidelity of this country has assumed. Most who doubt are as much unsettled concerning the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, as about the Bible. It is denominated political atheism; because in France and here its theories extend to the modification of the religious, civil, and social state of man, contemplating nothing less than the abolition of marriage and the family state, separate property, civil government, and all sense of accountability, and all religious worship—an effort to turn the world upside down, and empty it of every institution, thought, feeling, and action which has emanated from Christianity, to unite mankind under the auspices of atheism.

That such associations exist, and are acting in correspondence, and are extending themselves through the country, is a matter of notoriety. That they can no longer, with safety, be despised, or permitted to move on without some effort to apprise the community of their character and designs, is equally certain; for though no doubt public sentiment, when brought to act upon them, will render them harmless, it is no less true that the reality and nature of these associations must be understood that this great corrector may act upon them.

It will be the object, therefore, of this lecture to illus-

trate the doctrines, the follies, and dangers of Political Atheism.

The creed inscribed on the black flag around which these men have rallied is short and dreadful. It is raised high, and floats on the breeze, proclaiming, in capitals, to every eye, that THERE IS NO GOD—NO RESURRECTION—NO FUTURE STATE—NO FREE AGENCY—NO ACCOUNTABILITY—NO VIRTUE—NO SIN—NO DEVIL—NO HEAVEN—NO HELL—AND THAT DEATH IS AN ETERNAL SLEEP: that man is a thinking, reasoning machine, governed mechanically, according to the laws of animated matter: that evidence governs the understanding, and motives the will, on the same principle that percussion moves the pebble, and weights turn the scales; and that all events are made certain by a material, mechanical necessity. There is nothing in the universe but matter, is the one article of the atheist's creed.

The political part of this creed is, that all coercive government by law is a contravention of liberty, and arbitrary, and unjust; that separate property is but a limb of the feudal system, and an anti-republican monopoly: that marriage is an unreasonable restraint on liberty, and ought to be abolished; and the family to be disbanded, as the citadel of selfishness and separate property, and all those aristocratic monopolies for the subversion of liberty, the perpetuity of priestcraft, and the vile union of Church and State: that the fear of God is a delusion; conscience, superstition; natural affection, the prejudice of education; chastity pusillanimous, and incontinence magnanimous.

To those who are not initiated in these mysteries it may be a matter of terrific curiosity to understand how all this is to be accomplished. An outline only can be given.

The belief in God's existence is to be *obliterated* by

exposing the sophistry that universal design is evidence of an intelligent designer, and accounting for the existence of things by the agency of almighty chance. The Bible is to be driven out of circulation by the detection and exposure of its imposture, absurdity, and pernicious influence. The Sabbath is to be obliterated as a waste of time, and its place supplied by occasional holidays for amusement and pleasure. Marriage is to be hooted out of society as a contemptible usurpation of liberty; while the entire race of men, free as other animals, wander over the great common field, and hold promiscuous intercourse, and eat, and drink, and propagate, and die. The property of the world is to become a common stock, to which each is to contribute by his labour, and from which he is to receive his rations of food and raiment in due season. The progeny of these emancipated animals is to be educated at the public expense; and legislators, instead of enacting laws for the government of men, are to be occupied in regulating those material circumstances whose mechanical power in education shall effectuate their perfection and introduce the atheistical political millennium. In the application of this nurture and admonition all are to be made equal in education, and continued equal in honour and property, that there may be no superiority to occasion pride, and no inferiority to provoke envy, but one great plain, without protuberance or indentation, over which the whole team, equally yoked, may move on to annihilation in blessed equanimity.

This hopeful change in human affairs is to be accomplished by the indefatigable and systematic effort of the initiated to revolutionise public sentiment, until it shall speak at the polls and in the halls of legislation, and vote out of the world God, and the Bible, and the Sabbath, and public worship, and the gospel ministry, and marriage,

and the family, and all inequality of knowledge, and honour, and profit, and all government but the government of circumstances, to make way for the millennium of reason and nature, in which man may live without God, and obey the flesh without shame, and die without fear.

In this crusade against Christianity and Heaven, the press is to be deeply enlisted ; and, by periodicals, and newspapers, and tracts, and caricature prints, everywhere disseminated, is to dispel the existing darkness, pour daylight on the human mind, and inoculate the people with the virus of idomitable liberty, to whose ferocious heart and fiery eye religious and civil liberty, and inequality of property, the restraints of law, and virtue itself, shall be represented as usurpation and treason ; and the pavements, which in Europe are torn up to batter down despotism, shall here be turned against the temples of God and the laws of the land. As a powerful auxiliary in this work of universal emancipation, woman is to be enlisted—woman, unperverted, the pattern of whatsoever things are pure and lovely; but herself corrupted, a paragon of deformity, a demon in human form.

But as Mahomet, when deception moved him on to power, shortened the process of conversion by force, so these friends of universal liberty, when power shall second inclination, intend and now threaten to put out the sun of righteousness, and compel us to float through life in the stream of licentious animalism. Upon both parts of this system, its falsehood and its folly, I must be permitted to make a few observations.

Under the first head, I have the following remarks to offer :—

1. It is a thing eminently to be desired that there should be a supreme benevolent intelligence, who is the creator and moral governor of the universe, whose subjects

and kingdom shall endure for ever. Such a one the nature of man demands, and his whole soul pants after.

We feel our littleness in the presence of the majestic elements of nature, and our weakness compared with their power, and our loneliness in the vast universe, unenlightened, unguided, and unblessed by any intelligence superior to our own. We behold the flight of time, the passing fashion of the world, and the gulf of annihilation curtained with the darkness of an eternal night. At the side of this vortex, which covers with deep oblivion the past, and impenetrable darkness the future, nature shudders and draws back; and the soul, with sinking heart, looks mournfully around upon this fair creation, and up to these beautiful heavens, and in plaintive accents demands, "Is there, then, no deliverance from this falling back into nothing? Must this conscious being cease—this reasoning, thinking power, and these warm affections—their delightful movements? Must this eye close in an endless night, and this heart fall back upon everlasting insensibility? O thou cloudless sun, and ye far-distant stars, in all your journeyings in light, have ye discovered no blessed intelligence who called you into being, lit up your fires, marked your orbits, wheels you in your courses, around whom ye roll, and whose praises ye silently celebrate? Are ye empty worlds and desolate, the sport of chance; or, like our sad earth, are ye peopled with inhabitants waked up to a brief existence, and hurried reluctantly from an almost untasted being back to nothing? Oh that there were a God who made you, greater than ye all, whose being in yours we might see, whose intelligence we might admire, whose will we might obey, and whose guidance we might adore!" Such, except where guilt seeks annihilation as the choice of evils, is the unperverted universal longing after God and immortality.

2. There is no evidence that there is not a self-existent eternal Mind, who is the creator and providential and moral governor of the universe. Something, it is admitted, must have been eternal; and it may as well be self-existent mind as self-existent matter. It is as easy to conceive of a mind self-existent and eternal, which shall systematise the universe, as of a self-existent eternal systematised material universe. That which exists without beginning or cause without itself cannot be reasoned about, and may be one thing as well as another. It may as well be believed that there is a self-existent voluntary mind as that there is a self-existent organised universe.

3. The evidence of the existence of a self-existent Mind is as great as it would be if what we behold were, in fact, the product and evidence of such an existence. The only evidence of invisible intelligent mind is the manifestation of design; and the only evidence of design is the adaptation of means to ends, in such a manner as cannot be accounted for by accident, without the absurdity of supposing effects without a cause.

But if there were a God who spread abroad these heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and balanced the solar system, and sent his handy workmanship, from its stupendous development in guiding great events, down through all the gradations and departments of nature to the confines of nothing, he could not, by the adaptation of means to ends, more clearly or fully declare his eternal power and godhead. Every page is covered and crowded with plans and their execution. If design, then, is evidence of a designer, we might exclaim, Whither shall we go from thy presence?

4. The supposition that all these indications of design are the results of the unthinking, undesigning energies of nature involves the contradiction of supposing an endless

series of effects without a cause; for though nature might be supposed to move without thought, uniform and all-pervading design is a kind of movement to be accounted for only from mind. You might as well account for the existence of change without cause, as for uniform and universal design without mind. Design, without intelligence, is therefore an effect without a cause; and therefore a universal *conatus* of nature cannot be the cause of the order, and beauty, and design, which meet the eye on every page of nature's book.

5. There are no facts which go to prove the existence of design without a designer.

The instinct of the bee does, indeed, produce her mathematically-constructed dwelling, but that instinct itself demands, or it indicates, an intelligent cause; for no one will suppose that the bee has studied mathematics, or that, unguided by mind, mathematical figures would grow up under her instinctive industry.

The affinities of matter, which unite particles in mathematical forms, are admitted to indicate design; but, as matter itself does not think, it indicates the arrangement of a mind not its own. All is material action without design.

6. The validity of design as evidence of an intelligent designer, is universally admitted in respect to man.

It is admitted that man is a rational, intelligent, voluntary being, acting by design; but the only evidence of it is contained in his works. Blot out evidence of design, and you throw over mind the veil of idiocy. The evidence of an intelligent mind in man, contained in the evidence of design in his works, is conclusive.

No one has the hardihood to examine cities, manufactories, farms, turnpikes, steamboats, railroads, book-stores, fleets and armies, and deny to man the visitations of reason.

But the only difference in the argument, as applied to men and to God, is the extent and complication of a universal design, above the narrow limits of human intellect.

We only add that the evidence of the being of a supreme intelligent mind, from universal design, is not the result of multiplied probabilities, but is a strict demonstration of the being of God.

That no effect can exist without a cause is a self-evident proposition. That design produced by undesigning causes is an effect without a cause, is equally self-evident; and that universal design indicates a universal designer, as clearly as human design indicates a limited designer, and that the designer whose plans pervade the universe is the self-existent, eternal, almighty mind, who moves and governs the universe, are all alike intuitive.

The folly of Political Atheism consists in the reversing of all this reasoning—in teaching that effects may exist without a cause, and universal design without a designer. The existence of a watch proves on earth the existence of an intelligent mind; but the mechanism of the universe proves nothing.

It happened unexplained, and came without cause, from chaos, into order and beauty. The conjectures concerning the progress of this great accident are various. One only can be given; but this, though short, is full of wonders.

Some time ago, after chaos and old night had reigned undisturbed from eternity, and matter had fermented, and tossed, and rolled into almost infinite forms, it happened to fall, for the first time, into just those relations which constituted the volcanic power; when, in a moment, an explosion took place, loud as ten thousand thunders, which sent out innumerable suns, flying in fusion through space, streaming athwart the darkness their baleful light, till they stopped, and became fixed stars in the glorious firma-

ment above. But they carried in their bosom the sad accidents which gave them birth; and new throes ensued, sending out around them comets, and planets, and satellites, all moving in elliptic orbits with arithmetical accuracy, so that, for ages past, and for ages to come, the almanac discloses their movements with as exact an accuracy as the clock tells of time. What chance it was which checked their flight, and, by a resolution of forces, wheeled them round in their elliptical career; or why, the centripetal power exhausted, they did not fall back, with accelerated momentum, into the horrible crater whence they sprung; or where that mass might be which could furnish matter of which to make the universe, and sustain the reaction of sending it out—that mighty cannon, whose shot are suns and worlds—our philosophers have not yet discovered. But so it happened; they were exploded, and as yet they have not fallen back or ceased to move.

And now, leaving the suns, and orbs, and other systems, we descend to trace the history of our own mother earth, whom we meet reeking from her recent explosion, her waves of fire tossing and raging, which, as they cooled, crusted and stood upright as a heap, and became the perpetual hills and everlasting mountains. The weightier masses sunk downward towards the centre, with lighter and lighter deposits above, leaving the crust, when pulverised, for fallow ground and harvest.

As yet, however, the earth was without form and void, and a hideous nakedness spread over its late burning surface, when, strange to tell, grass and trees sprang up, and began to ornament the hills and carpet the valleys; and hard on the footsteps of this wonder trod another—the waters teemed with organic life, which lashed with oar the pliant wave, and sported in the deep; and suddenly the hills sent down to the valleys, and the valleys

sent back to the hills, the bleating of flocks and herds, while the groves sent forth the joyous notes of birds and insects. All these, in grand concert, burst out upon the silence of nature; and all, as they needed, waited on almighty chance, who gave them their meat in due season.

The organisation of this delighted choir was such as demanded respiration, and the flowing of a warm blood, for which an elastic atmosphere was needed; and it happened, as the earth cooled and consolidated, that several gases escaped from confinement, so exactly of the same specific gravity, and blessed with such social and friendly dispositions, that they agreed to exist in partnership, and to surround the earth, and most benevolently to volunteer their aid for respiration—each, alone, deadly to life, but, united, its sustaining power.

This world of breathing animation rose up with optics —camera-obscura in the head, to pencil inside the images of objects without. When, lo! the orb of day, when he fled from his heated prison, forgot not, in his panic, to take with him stores of light, manufactured for immediate use, which ever since he has been pouring out, unexhausted, in marvellous abundance—light, so dexterously compounded of seven colours as to be colourless, and well adapted to the purposes of vision.

But amid this exuberance of animated being there was not a man to till the ground or admire the beauties of nature. Behold, then, another wonder: the fortuitous concourse of atoms, before the earth so cooled as to stop fermentation, produced a human skeleton; around which, with kind affinity, came the sinews and the muscles, and took their places. The lungs for breathing, and the arteries and veins to carry around the vital fluid, offered their aid, and were accepted. The nervous system—semi-animal, semi-spiritual—took its middle place, as arbitrator

between the soul and the body. And, to cover what otherwise had been unsightly, kind nature provided a blanket, and, with kind sympathy, threw its velvet covering over the whole. The eye, too, lit itself up accidentally, just at the moment it was wanted, and the socket stood excavated for its reception, and the mucus warm to make it easy, and the ligament to tie it in. The mouth opened at the right time to prevent suffocation, and in the right place for speech, and ornamented with double rows of ivory for mastication. While nature's self, with pencil dipped in the colours of heaven, stood by, well pleased to put upon her beauteous workmanship the finish of the sparkling eye, and rosy cheek, and ruby lip. All this, however, had constituted only a beauteous animal, but for the glorious accident of a machine for thinking, which happened to pass that way, and consented to stop a little, and make an experiment of its powers in the upper department of this marvellous product of chance. It took its place, and swung the pendulum, and has continued to go with surprising accuracy; though latterly, in some instances, it has seemed to be out of order, and to stand in need of some little rectification in respect to its reasoning powers.

There is no evidence, then, that the indications of design around and above us are the results of accident, or of eternal material causes. None, that when the earth had so cooled as not to scald, and was so liquid that affinities could come together, men, self-made, like locusts crawled out of the slime, and managed to get on their feet, and, by experience, ascertained the centre of motion and learned to walk. If such had been the sport of nature, we should expect to find fragments of bodies, as you find iron castings in your foundries; heads, legs, ribs, arms, and teeth, in wild confusion. For why should

nature always happen to finish a thing? But in nature's workshop all is complete, working always, without intellect and voluntary design, as if she had understanding, and worked according to the wise and "benevolent counsel of her own eternal will."

All indications of design in the arts of life are traceable to intelligent minds. No one for a moment believes that sawmills and steamboats were ever made without intelligent design; and the man who should make a pond of water, and throw in all sorts of chemical materials, and stir them up, and wait for beds and chairs to happen, would have to wait a great while. The age of such accidents, if they ever did occur, must have long since passed away.

It must be confessed, however, that those who retail such dreams lay their scenes so distant in past duration that none can possibly convict them of falsehood by opposing facts.

But suppose that, a great way this side of eternity and fabulous history, and in the region of common-sense, I should ask you, "Who built that furnace?" would any of you answer, "Nobody built it. There was a pond of water there once, and, when it was drying up, somehow, by the action of chemical affinities, one night it came up out of the mud!"

"But who made that steam-engine?" "Why, nature, when she saw that she had a workshop, thought she would try her hand at the arts; and so she threw in the plentiful material which kindled up the fire, and out came this steam-engine."

We prove, then, the existence of the eternal Mind, just as we prove that of the human mind. Just as you prove yourselves to be rational beings, so do I prove the being of a God. But if you deny that design proves a designer,

then will I deny your rationality, and treat you as animals of instinct; but if you admit the evidence of your own rationality, you cannot resist the inference: it will sweep upward, and stop only at the throne of God.

Suppose you should send out now a committee through this city, to ascertain whether there be in it any indications of mind, and they should return and report that "your committee have made diligent search, and can find no evidence of any such thing."

"What! did you go into the stores, and did you see no manufactured goods?"

"Oh, yes! We saw such things in great abundance, but nothing that might not have come by chance, as well as grass and trees."

"But did you go into the jewellers' stores, and the toy-shops?"

"Yes; we went everywhere, and saw nothing but the products of nature, all the offspring of chance."

"But did you see no men, and women, and children?"

"Yes; we saw plenty of these automatons, children of nature, going about; but we saw no evidence that they had any mind, nothing which indicated that they might not have come by chance, as well as the sun and solar system, and the horses and mules, and other animals that we saw along the streets."

But suppose your committee should return and report that at every step they found evidence of intelligent mind. Then let them sweep with the telescope the glorious concave of heaven, and, with the microscope, the glorious world of equal wonders beneath, and they would proclaim that the evidence of mortal intelligence was nothing compared with the overwhelming evidence of the existence of an Almighty God.

Let us now attend to a new and more direct and

positive evidence, that *the aggregate of material causes* is not the cause of universal apparent design, and that *mind* is the cause.

We observe, then, that it is intuitively certain that *something* must be eternal; for absolute nothing could not begin to be or to do anything. Had there ever been a period, therefore, in which nothing existed, there could have been no existence now. It is the universal philosophical proposition of Mahometan, Pagan, and Christian, that from nothing no positive existence can come into being. No star had twinkled, or firmament had spread its curtain athwart the sky; no solid earth had appeared, or track of foot, animal or human. The wind had not breathed, and the wave had not rolled; for all around and everywhere is blank vacancy—space, infinite, unoccupied—and dead silence. But something does exist; therefore something is eternal.

It is also self-evident that whatever is eternal is self-existent, unbeginning, underived, uncaused, uncreated, possessing in itself the resources of its own being. This is the true and only correct conception of self-existence.

It is alike intuitive that whatever is self-existent is immutable; for, being the first existence, and above and independent of, and anterior to, all causes but those of its own existence, it cannot be approached and exposed to changes by causes without itself, nor to the decay and failure or change of the essential resources of its own being.

That, therefore, which has in and of itself existed from all eternity, must be the same, and now in no danger of failure or change in the eternity which is to come. Whatever, therefore, is self-existent and surrounded by universal vacancy, must be from everlasting to everlasting the same.

But what is this self-existent eternal something?

There are but two known existences in the universe—*matter* and *mind;* and that these are real, and different, and opposite existences is as obvious and as certain as the existence of either.

We learn the existence of matter from its attributes and various causative powers; and we ascertain the existence of mind by its different and opposite attributes and causative powers.

Matter is a solid extended substance, unperceiving, unfeeling, unthinking, unreasoning, without desire, will, design, or executive energy; inert and immovable, but as moved by a power other than its own.

Mind is just the opposite of matter, a perceiving, thinking, feeling, social, reasoning, desiring, voluntary executive energy, whose nature it is to act by its own powers, in perception, feeling, thought, reasoning, desire, choice, and action, as it is of matter to be a solid, extended, inert substance. The proof that matter and mind exist is obvious to inspection, and as great as it can be; and the proof that mind exists as mind, and distinct from matter, is as great as that matter exists as matter. And the evidence that they are totally different and opposite existences is as obvious and certain as that one kind of matter differs from another, or that matter or mind exist at all.

Having, then, ascertained that something is self-existent and eternal, and that matter and mind both exist, we approach the question, which of the two is the eternal self-existent? and this we can decide only by their well-known properties, and their adaptation to produce the things that are. If the attributes of matter are adapted to produce the things that are, and those of mind are not adequate, our verdict must be that matter is the self-existent.

But if matter should appear demonstrably inadequate, and mind well adapted and competent, to produce the things that be, then mind must be regarded as the eternal self-existent.

But, in exploring the earth, a large portion of matter is found in organic forms of life and motion, of which matter knows nothing, and for which it has no inherent power; such as grass, plants, shrubs, trees, insects, fish, fowls, animals, and human bodies. But it is certain that these organic, living, moving forms did not of their own accord spring up from dead matter, whose first and only law is the power of lying still till moved. History has recorded no examples of self-organised matter, and all the progress made in chemistry in this nineteenth century affords no encouragement that such discoveries will be made. No chemist has yet been able to make a spire of grass, or a single leaf, or insect, or animal, much less a human body, with a thinking, reasoning, active mind, the result of material combinations. These all are certainly beyond the sphere of material power, and are not eternal; for then they must be self-existent, and then immutable, and then they must be in existence now—eternal self-existent men and women and children, and cattle and trees, and all things.

But we find no eternal men, nor oxen, nor trees; but rather that all things that exist now—all the men and women and children, and trees and animals—are of recent existence, and have come down to us from others of their kind, that have passed away. Whereas, if all things were from the beginning as now, an eternal aggregate, all things that now exist are eternal, and we ourselves are eternal, though our memory extends back but a few years, and our existence is hastening to a close.

But there is no greater nonsense than the supposition

of an eternal material nature, self-existent, and immutable, and just as things now are. Every one of all the indications of design, in organised matter and living bodies, disproves the agency of matter, and demonstrates the attributes and agency of mind.

If we ascend from the earth and examine the phenomena of the heavens, we behold greater wonders of design and mental executive energy: immense bodies of matter in motion, indicative of wisdom, benevolence, and power, which may well be denominated infinite; and at such immeasurable distances as render them fit symbols of the immensity of the power which made and sustains and controls them.

By their analogies, it is manifest they are composed of matter, so far as respects their mutual attraction; and their motion is not the result of their own power of attraction. The power of gravity, being in straight parallel lines, is not a power of action, but ultimately of rest; so that, without another and an equal transverse power, if the planets of our system had been shot out of volcanoes, they must long since have fallen back into their immeasurable crater, and been at rest.

Whence, then, is the power which holds the sun in his place, in relation to the other suns in space, and prevents his own family of planets and comets from rushing into his bosom?

Whence it is not, we know. It is certain that matter has no such power; and it is equally certain, as a matter of fact, that a transverse power at right angles with the attraction of gravity does exist, and, by a resolution of forces, bends the family of planets to revolve about their parent sun in elliptical orbits, and with an efficiency that has not varied for ages, and with the accuracy of a chronometer. Can this be the instinctive *conatus* of material

nature, the effervescence of gases, and acids, and alkalies, or the chemical combinations of minerals and salt-water? Do these orbs regulate our clocks, and measure out our time and seasons? What, then, can be that mighty power that gave it the transverse impulse, but He that "measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Who but God, the eternal, omniscient, and almighty? If you remember that all these planets, and satellites, and comets are in mazes of constant and swift motion, varying continually their relations and mutual attractions towards the sun and one another, modifying their centre of motion and their orbits, you must see the necessity of an omniscient, omnipotent power.

It has lately been discovered by astronomers that the nebulæ of the Milky Way are fixed stars; and that these, with all the others, not only maintain their relative positions to one another, but are beginning to indicate a common motion in the same direction, as if revolving round some common centre. Are such sublime indications of wisdom, benevolence, and power to be swept away by an alleged eternal, unproved and disproved, almighty, unthinking, undesigning nothing?

We have now consummated the evidence of an eternal self-existent mind. To our conception, it is as great as the evidence of any existence whatever—as great as evidence can be. And yet various objections to this evidence are urged by sceptics, and arise in the minds of other thinking men. We shall, therefore, not have done full justice to the subject, and have met the exigencies of the working-men, till we have stated and answered them.

Objection 1st.—It has been said that there is no such

thing in the universe as cause and effect—nothing but powerless antecedents and consequents, which we call causes and effects, because they always appear together.

This is the theory of Hume, and of several other philosophers who were not sceptics. The argument is, that we cannot see the causative power, and therefore there is none.

But are invisible causes no causes? Is the invisible *modus operandi* no mode of action? Who sees the gases, or the electric power, or the attraction of gravity? and is there, therefore, in these, no causative power, because they are invisible? What is the proof? Assertion only. What is the evidence of the reality of causative power in antecedents and consequents? That universally the results are as they would be if the antecedents were the causes of the consequents, and there is no evidence to the contrary; while this concurrence itself of mere antecedents without causative power is a universal phenomenon, wholly without any cause, and wholly without any evidence.

It must be admitted that if there are no causes within our cognisance, there are no effects; and it would be impossible to rise up through nature's work to nature's God; indeed, it would be difficult to prove that there is any such thing as nature. It is true that what we call the labouring men have, in their simplicity, thought that there are real causes; that the ox, by the chain, draws the plough that turns the furrow; and the woodman, by his axe, cuts the wood; and the artisan thinks that his saw and chisel do execution. But this nineteenth century has developed such effulgences of light that we cannot tell what we be, or where we be, or whether we be at all. So that we all may say, emphatically, What nothings were our fathers, and what nothings to our children are we!

OBJECTION 2ND.—It is said that the argument from effect to cause proves too much, involving the necessity of supposing another God, the creator of him who made the heavens and the earth, and another that created him, and onward *ad infinitum*.

Our answer is, that our argument involves no such thing; for, as we infer the existence of human mind from the indications men afford of mental being, so we infer the existence of a greater mind, whose work proclaims him omnipotent, inhabiting eternity, and filling immensity with suns and worlds. Were there no indications of mental being beyond the sphere of human agency, we should stop at man; but the indications of mental being, and attributes that fill the universe with suns and worlds, afford as conclusive evidence of an infinite mind, as human plans and works afford of the human mind. And we go no further, because we have found a cause adequate to all that is seen and known; and we go no further, because we have yet to find a scrap of evidence of any other or greater effects than those produced by Him whose invisible attributes are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

But whenever another universe shall be discovered so much greater than that manifested by our God, and demanding a greater God than he to create it, then we will think about it; but until then, as at present advised, we shall continue to worship the God of the present discovered universe, as the only self-existent, eternal, almighty, wise, benevolent, and true God.

OBJECTION 3RD.—There is no necessity, it is said by some, of a self-existent, eternal Mind. All we see of men and things may come down from eternity in infinite succession, with all their variety of attributes,

energies, and effects, just as they are and always will be —an infinite series, for example, of men and trees.

ANSWER.—It may be that all things have not come down by succession from eternity. There is no necessity of supposing this. There is no evidence that it is so; and the evidence is as great as it can be that it is not so. That mind is the author of this world and the universe is as evident as that the human mind is the author of the plans and products of its power and skill within its sphere. And the evidence of the existence of the Divine Mind is as much greater than the evidence of the human mind, as his works, in number, wisdom, benevolence, power, and immensity, surpass the works of man. But the supposed infinite series of men is a palpable impossibility.

For an infinite which can be increased is no infinite at all; but numerals, units, can never be so augmented as that they do not admit of more. An infinite series of numbers is as really an impossibility as that infinite space should be filled by finite creations.

But an infinite succession of causes and effects is as absurd as it is impossible. For, to get rid of a self-existent eternal mind, it supposes every part of this series to be the effect of an antecedent cause, while the aggregate whole is an effect utterly without a cause.

Suppose a chain should descend, in our presence, from an unknown height, and I should demand, What supports that lower link? You would answer, The link above it. And what supports that? The third and the fourth, and so on. But what supports the entire chain? It is an infinite chain, and hangs on nothing. It is a perfect contradiction, which assumes that every link is dependent on another, while the whole is without support—a series of effects without a cause.

OBJECTION 4TH.—But it is said that we may as well suppose matter, with all its attributes, and appearances of design and power, self-existent and eternal, as to suppose a self-existent eternal mind.

ANSWER.—Were we to reason *à priori* what the eternal self-existence must be, or how many kinds there might be, we might suppose what we pleased on subjects that we know nothing about, and publish dreams and Arabian Nights' Entertainments. We might promulgate fantastic theories as to the elementary structure of the moon, and confidently dogmatise upon the nature of the dark spots on the sun, and multiply systems of the imagination endless as the changing forms of the kaleidoscope, but as far from truth as the spider's web is from a cable, or a vacuum from substance.

But our argument for the being of a God does not rest on *à priori* reasonings or theories, or suppositions baseless, but on facts which cannot be disputed without denying the existence of all things.

We reject matter, therefore, as the eternal self-existence, because the known attributes and phenomena of the material universe are such as matter cannot produce.

The supposition is a begging of the question, not only without evidence, but against all possible evidence. It is a contradiction of the immemorial nature and universal definition of matter, as a substance inert, unperceiving, unfeeling, unthinking, and motionless till moved.

The power, for example, that starts the motion of the planets does not belong to matter. It is a power transverse to the power of gravity, without which every planet would have been at rest, long since, in the sun; a power so nicely balancing that of attraction as, by a resolution of forces, to produce an elliptical orbit.

There is the comet also, apparently the lightest and

loosest form of moving matter, smitten with such affection for the sun as requires such a transverse stroke to balance it as sends him, panic-struck and blazing, through an eccentric orbit of many years. Who gave that impulse to the planet, and that stronger impulse to the comet? Matter, from all her worlds in motion, declares, It is not in me!

Then, the turning of the earth on her axis—the cause of day and night, and the standard of the measurement of time—is the result of no material cause; for the earth moves without friction, *in vacuo*, which could originate no revolving power. What, then, is the power by which she turns on her axis? And the earth, as the universe before, answers, It is not in me!

We now turn our attention to the human body to decide whether matter is competent to its organisation, and life, and powers of action. The body is composed of four generic kinds of matter, of almost endlessly diversified composition, to constitute the bones, sinews, ligaments, muscles, brain, and nerves that convey to the brain the reports of the senses, and either of which being cut, the intelligence stops by the way. Then there are five senses, which send through the nerves their intelligence to the royal mind: the eye, a camera-obscura, sending in, in miniature, the image of things without; the ear, a trumpet, to gather sound to a focus on the drum; the nose, to aid in breathing, when the mouth is closed, and to warn us of the presence of grateful or repellant effluvia; taste, to alleviate the irksomeness of eating by the compensations of appetite and pleasure; and the net-work of nerves spread over the whole body, to watch and give notice of the slightest aggression made on its surface, so that the point of a pin cannot touch it without a sentinel's sending instantly the intelligence to head-quarters. Beside these,

there are numbers of distinct departments to co-operate in the complex general result; the brain, through which the mind receives intelligence, and acts upon the voluntary muscles of the body; the stomach, a chemical laboratory, to receive and decompose the materials of nutrition; the lacteals, taking up the nourishing fluid, and sending it on its way, through vein and heart, to the lungs, there to be oxygenated and electrified, and thence delivered back to the heart, which, by its unceasing, untiring, and mighty power, drives it through the round of arteries and veins, those highways and byways through which it wanders, till, exhausted by its deposits, it returns for a new supply.

A similar contrivance sustains the life of all animals of blood, and to all plants and trees a system appertains by which they may draw fluid nutrition from the earth, each according to its nature.

But all these organised forms are foreign to matter. It has no nature, and no laws of nature, that could produce these things; and to assume that it has such powers is to beg the question again, and contradict the admitted nature and definition of matter, as a solid, extended, unperceiving, unfeeling, unthinking substance. It has in itself no power of motion, and no such mutual attraction of particles as would bring them together by affinities into the generic and specific compounds which constitute the structure of the human body. Let the sceptical chemist make a human body of all the required elements in due proportions, and let him appoint the day for nature, in the presence of thousands, to apply the vital spark, and start the heaving lungs, and electrify the circulating blood, and wake up thought, and the warm affections, and the energetic will; and let him bring his sacrifice, and from morning till evening cry, "O nature, hear us!" and there will be neither noise nor motion nor life.

If anyone should insist that the particles of matter do feel and think, he must admit that she has been wonderfully patient, vexed as she has been with the plough and the hoe, and the footsteps of men, and the tramp of horses, and shock of battle, that in all time not one of her poor dumb mouths should have been opened to groan or complain. But if the separate particles of matter do not think or feel, he must have a strong faith to believe that nothing added to nothing could produce feeling, thought, and speech.

OBJECTION 5TH.—A recent writer, the author of the "Vestiges of Creation," modestly suggests—That possibly matter may be the eternal self-existence, and the present condition of the earth and its inhabitants the slow progressive results of the native energies—a sort of tenuous nebula at first, and gradually, by a law of her own nature, tending towards consolidation and organisation. The results of this self-moved *conatus* of matter he supposes to have been developed—first, in the lowest and most imperfect orders, such as worms and reptiles; next, in fish and amphibious animals; then in quadrupeds of higher and higher grades; and last, in the highest order of all, gradually approached through the monkey tribe—man, the lord of the material self-creation. He then attempts, from geological discoveries of fossil remains, to establish this chronological order of nature in the commencement and completion of her works, and with an apparent success that cheered the sceptical and alarmed some pious minds.

But upon this latest effort to set aside the evidence of a self-existent mind by the supposition of self-existent matter, we remark—

1. That it is a theory without an atom of evidence to sustain it.

2. It is in opposition to all the hitherto known laws and definitions of matter.

3. It is without the least logical support from his facts, were they all admitted to be real. For it is taken for granted by him, without the least evidence, that these beginnings, and approximations to motion and organisation, are the self-moved action of matter, and not the progressive results of the action of an Almighty mind. But how did inert matter begin its first motion?

But, last of all, the underpinning of this mighty structure, which was to supplant the throne of God, in a moment fell, when Hugh Miller had discovered in the *old red sandstone*—a formation belonging to one of the earlier geological epochs—fossil remains of fish the most perfect, and which, according to this theory, should have been the most imperfect; in the light of which the whole pyramid tumbled, as the baseless fabric of a vision. The theory remains, but its proofs are not forthcoming.

OBJECTION 6TH.—The last objection I shall notice is among the most melancholy evidences of the weakness and wickedness of the alienated heart of man, and of the necessity of a revelation. It is a literary curiosity, at which we might smile, were it not the tombstone of all past and all coming generations. I extract, with his permission, from the "Bibliotheca Sacra," Professor Stowe's account of the Hegelian philosophy. I do this—first, because the accuracy of his quotations from the German will not be questioned; secondly, because the imminent perils of this philosophy to our nation have never been so intelligibly explained; and, thirdly, because the solemnity and weight of his warnings demand in every way the greatest practicable circulation.

"But what is the Hegelian philosophy? I have been admonished more than once to treat this philosophy with

respect, to admire it at least as an 'exquisite work of art, if not a system of absolute truth.' I shall do my best in this particular. I have acknowledged before, and here repeat the acknowledgment, that I have no very definite knowledge of it. It stands before me, in its bulk and its unintelligibleness, as a huge, shapeless, threatening spectre, most fitly described in the words of Virgil—

> Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.
> (A monster, horrid, hideous, huge, and blind.)

And when I think of the tremendous influence it exerts, and the mighty mischief it is making, it assumes to me (in the language ot Milton)—

> The other shape,
> If shape it may be called which shape has none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb—
> Or substance may be called that shadow seems;
> For each seems either—black it stands as night,
> Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
> And shakes a dreadful dart; and what seems its head
> The likeness of a kingly crown has on.

"We speak here of the Hegelian philosophy only in its connexion with religion, and as it now exists. Whatever of obscurity may rest over some of its speculations, its principal bearings upon religion are perfectly intelligible, and are carried out to their extreme consequences with a cool audacity that is almost frightful. According to Hegelianism, the *subjective* is not only more than the *objective*, but the *subjective* is the whole, it is the entire substance, and the *objective* has no existence except as the shadow, or reflection, or creation of the *subjective*. The great discovery boasted by Hegel and his followers, the great first principle of all truth, the honour of whose development Schelling in vain attempted to dispute with Hegel, is the *absolute identity of subject and object*; that

is, I suppose, the thing perceiving and the thing perceived are one and the same thing.

"Admitting this as a fundamental principle, what is God? Is God the creator of man, or is man the creator of God? The latter, of course. The human mind is the only development of God; only by the workings of the human soul does God arrive at self-consciousness; and if there were no men, there could be no God. There seems to be recognised a sort of *natura naturans*—a sort of blind, unconscious, fermenting leaven, constantly working; but this never attains to personality or consciousness, except in the human soul.

"We will not ourselves undertake to make the statements of the doctrines of this sect; we will make them just as they are made by one of the most able and active of the living advocates of the system, in his work entitled "Das Wesen des Christenthums." This is a favourite book among the Germans of our own country, and can be obtained in any quantities at our principal German bookstores. A brief but very satisfactory notice of it has been given in the "Christian Examiner," published in Boston, No. CLXI.

"Says this writer, 'The absolute Being, the God of man, is man's own being.' 'Since God is but our own being, the power of any object over us is the might of our own being. In willing, loving, feeling, etc., there is no influence but of ourselves over ourselves.' 'All limiting of the reason rests on error.' 'Every being is all-sufficient to itself.' 'It is delusion to suppose the nature of man a limited nature.' 'Religion is the consciousness of the infinite; it is and can be nothing but man's consciousness of his own infinite being.' 'If you think infinity, or feel infinity, it is the infinity of thought and feeling—nothing else. The knowledge of God is the knowledge of our-

selves; for the religious object is within us.' 'God is man's revealed inner nature—his pronounced self. Religion is the solemn unveiling of the concealed treasures of humanity, the disclosure of its secret thoughts, the confession of its dearest secrets. The Christian religion is the relation of man to his own being as to another being.' 'Religion is the dream of the human soul.'

"This is not caricature, nor ridicule, nor misrepresentation. It is just a plain statement of some of the prominent doctrines of the system, by one of its most able advocates. There is no God; and the devout man, when he thinks he is worshipping God, is simply worshipping himself. There is no accountability; there is no individual immortality; when a man dies, his soul is re-absorbed into the great mass of being, by the *natura naturans*, to be again, perhaps, in time developed, and so on from eternity to eternity. These principles are boldly and openly avowed, and find able and popular advocates both in Germany and in this country. One of the most eminent of German republicans, Dr. Voight, of Giessen, during the summer of 1848, declared publicly in the Frankfort Parliament that there could be no permanent freedom till the idea of God, and of all responsibility to God, were entirely banished from the human mind. No wonder that the German revolution, with such men to lead it, proved a miserable failure. No wonder that the pious, intelligent, sober men of Europe, viewed the whole movement with distrust, and finally abandoned it altogether. Atheistic liberty is the worst kind of tyranny. The editorial article in a political newspaper, published in Cincinnati, during the present year, says, 'Religion is the cause of all the oppression which exists, inasmuch as it cajoles poor sufferers with the chimerical idea of a heaven hereafter; and the source of religion is want of education,

ignorance. This is the origin of all evil.' The same principles, with a little more regard to a religious public sentiment, and partially disguised under a garb of specious phraseology, are zealously propagated in New England, and infect large numbers, especially of our educated young men. Before they begin to feel the need of religion, the foundation of religious faith is taken away. For this work of ruin the genius of Hegelianism has peculiar facilities. It can approach unperceived and accomplish its purpose before its presence is suspected. It can use the language of any theology, even the most orthodox, and convey its own ideas in the words of an evangelical faith.

"One of these phrases already quoted from Feuerbach may serve as an example of the deceptive manner in which language may be used. It is this: 'God is man's inner nature, his pronounced self.' Here, it may be alleged, is the New Testament doctrine of the Logos, the God-man, God revealed; and in like manner we may get the Holy Ghost, as that may be considered to be the inner nature of man re-acting upon itself, and this may be called that spiritual influence which good men crave and pray for. Thus can the Hegelian atheist, with most conscientious deceptiveness, use all the language of the Trinitarian Christian. For the Trinity of Hegel, see the last number of the "Bibliotheca," p. 293.

"With this philosophy testimony is nothing, objective narrative is nothing; history is not to be learned from external sources, it must be developed from within; facts must not be sought for, they must be made; and on this principle they act with great consistency and vigour, as we shall see when we come to examine the theories of the Gospel history. Another of the principles of this philosophy is eminently a practical one, namely, that 'man is God, and must worship himself.' This the Hegelians

do with the most enthusiastic devotion. Such self-worship was never before witnessed on earth. The enormous self-conceit of these men, the self-conceit of Hegel himself, the pitiful folly of his admirers who pronounced their eulogies over his grave, are among the greatest monstrosities which ever existed in this planet of monsters, comparable to nothing but the lizards larger than ten whales, and the frogs bigger than elephants, which are said to have existed on the pre-Adamite earth. Self-conceit is a symptom of the disease. The venerated Neander, in a letter to Professor Schaff, of Mercersburg, justly characterises the system as 'the philosophy of a one-sided logic, of intellectual fanaticism, and of *self-deification.*' My respected friend, Professor Schaff, himself, I am happy to see, takes no exceptions to this view of the subject. Indeed, he himself calls this kind of Hegelianism an 'arrogant pantheism, different from atheism only in form;' 'a lifeless formalism of the understanding, that destroys at last all soul in man, and turns him into a pure speculator on the open heath, an unfruitful thinker of thinking, a heartless critic and fault-finder.' (Schaff's "Kirchenfreund" for Jan., 1851; also "Mercersburg Review," vol. iii., p. 81, ff.)

"There is no disinterestedness in this philosophy, there is no veneration, there is no love. Each being is all-sufficient to itself, and each revolves round itself as its own centre, and each is at the same time both planet and sun, both axis and orbit. And what can come of such kind of principles but selfishness, and animalism, and every evil work?

"Now, it is such philosophers as these who presume to sit in judgment on the New Testament, to estimate the characters therein portrayed, to determine as to what is, and what is not, fitting in a revelation from God to man;

to decide with solemn majesty, *à priori*, from internal marks only, out of the depths of their own consciousness, and with nothing else to aid them, as to what is spurious, and what is genuine, in the sacred writings! How well they succeed, we shall see under our next head; and we will only say here, that if opposites are the best judges of opposites, if goats are the best judges of perfume, if worms have suitable qualifications to decide on the merits of eagles, then are these men qualified to sit in judgment on Jesus, and the apostles, and the writers of the gospels. Yet their writings are published, translated into different languages, and extensively read. In various ways they exert a great influence even over those who never read them; the echoes of their voice reverberate from many a newspaper and popular periodical; their sound is heard in many a lyceum, and mechanics' institute, and mercantile association, and debating-club. They inflate the vanity, and heighten the self-conceit, and set loose the passions of many a young man in our institutions of learning, and produce extensively a ruinous infection in the whole intellectual atmosphere, not sparing even the theological school, the ministerial study, or the Christian pulpit."—("Bibliotheca Sacra," vol. viii., pp. 508—512.)

LECTURE II.

CAUSES OF SCEPTICISM.

TRUTH is the reality of things. It is natural as it respects the material world, and moral as it respects mind, accountability, and moral government. Our knowledge of truth is by consciousness, intuition, the senses, and evidence.

Consciousness is the mind's recognition of its own being, powers, and actions.

Intuition is the mind's perception of obvious primary truths, which are the elements of demonstration, such as that every effect must have a cause, and that the sum of the parts is equal to the whole. It is intuition which constitutes the premises of demonstration, the primary truths being seen by the mind, and each step in the process also being a matter of intuition or mental perception.

The reports of the senses are called knowledge, because they so uniformly correspond with the reality of things that occasional aberration occasions no distrust, but rather confirms the general rule.

There is a yet wider field of knowledge, which lies without the sphere of consciousness and beyond the range of intuition and the cognisance of the senses, the realities of which are certified to us by evidence; and the confidence produced is called *belief*.

The evidence which sustains belief is either the evidence of human testimony, or the accumulation of probabilities from the uniform operation of the laws of nature. This

last evidence rests on the self-evident proposition that no effect can exist without a cause. We judge, from the supposition of a stated order of cause and effect, that what has been, and is, will continue to be, where there is no perceived cause of change; and this belief rises from faint probability to moral certainty, according to the frequency and uniformity of the effects produced. Had the sun never risen before to-day, the evidence of its rising to-morrow would be no greater than the appearance of a meteor in the sky would be of its return. But had the meteor appeared as uniformly as the sun has appeared, the evidence in both cases would be equal of a stated order of cause and effect.

The difference between demonstration and moral certainty is, that in one case the mind sees the objects of comparison, and sees the result, which, of course, is knowledge; but, in the other, derives its confidence from the perception of probabilities multiplying till they produce confidence or moral certainty. On the whole, consciousness, intuition, the senses, the evidence of testimony and analogy, all rest on the supposition that things are as they seem to be, and will continue to manifest the same attributes and results.

Scepticism is a state of mind in which these constitutional grounds of certainty fail to produce confidence. Sometimes the evidence does not satisfy the mind in respect to its sufficiency; and, in other cases, where the argument seems to be intellectually conclusive, it fails to produce any corresponding sense of the reality and certainty of the things proved. Sometimes, in cases of mental alienation, confidence is suspended, and men doubt their own being or personal identity. When it respects intuition, demonstration loses its power. When the senses are distrusted, experimental knowledge fails. In-

stances are not uncommon in which persons have supposed themselves or their friends to have become some other person; and I have just read of a gentleman who, for two years past, has refused to leave his dwelling, from the full persuasion that he is a teapot, and should endanger so frail a vessel by an unrestrained intercourse with external objects.

It is the field of moral government, however, and accountability, over which the mist of darkness is apt especially to gather, and doubts to settle down. For here the temptation to doubt is greatly enhanced by sinful character and its liabilities; and the facilities of perversion and distrust, from the nature of the evidence, are proportionably multiplied.

It is scepticism in relation to the being and government of God, and our relations to it as accountable subjects, as disclosed in the Bible, which will constitute the subject of this lecture.

I employ the term Scepticism in preference to the terms Atheism, Infidelity, and Heresy, because these are more invidious, and because scepticism marks more accurately the state of this entire class of minds. In fact, there are few who positively disbelieve the being of God or the inspiration of the Bible. To doubt is commonly the extent of human attainment, in throwing off reluctant responsibility to the government of God. The Atheist does not know that there is no God. He merely does not believe it, and doubts. The Deist does not disbelieve the inspiration of the Bible. He is merely not convinced that it is true, and doubts. Those who reject the received doctrines of the Bible do not fully disbelieve them. They fear often that they are true, hope earnestly that they are not, and doubt.

The present is eminently an age of scepticism through-

out the world. Pagans are becoming sceptical in respect to their ancient systems, Mahometans are beginning to distrust their ancient Prophet, and Papists to distrust the infallibility of his Holiness and the Church. And Protestants, instead of taking things upon trust, are, with increased determination, appealing from the decisions of men; and even sceptics themselves are beginning to doubt whether, in their sceptical wanderings, they have not got out of the way, and may not be in danger of being lost.

Whenever an epidemic sweeps over the world, we take it for granted that there is some universal cause; and, on the same principles, when we witness the wide-spread aberration of mind on the subject of evidence, we conclude that there are some causes of corresponding extent and power which produce the result.

It will be the object of this lecture to develope some of the causes of this mental phenomenon, as respects the being of God, the inspiration of the Bible, and the exposition of some of its doctrines.

1. Undoubtedly, the generic cause, without which all others would be powerless, is to be sought in the alienation of man from God, and his deep aversion to the responsibilities of his perfect and eternal government. It might not at first be supposed that a perfect government, consulting wisely and benevolently the highest good of every subject, could be an object of aversion; and to loyal minds it would not be; but to the disloyal its very perfection and stability are its terrific attributes. An attempt to execute strictly the laws of the land, on all points, would create a revolution; not because the laws are not good, but because men are evil. And it is because God is good, and men are evil, that they are averse to responsibility, and seek to alleviate their fears by the interposition of uncertainty and doubt. They are

willingly negligent of the acquisition of evidence, and slow of heart to believe what is proved, and dexterous, by inattention, to throw the testimony into a quick oblivion, and perpetuate around them a sceptical and unrealising state of mind.

2. The great perversion of Christianity during the dark ages, by the downfall of the Roman empire, the incursion of the northern barbarians, and the extinction of civil and religious liberty, has been, from age to age, a source of prejudice against Christianity, and a fruitful cause of declamation and scepticism.

During the midnight which settled down upon the world by the extinction of science and religion, the feudal system arose, which lies at the foundation of that inequality of rank and property which characterises and curses modern Europe. To perpetuate this unjust monopoly, the State gave its protection to the Church, and the Church gave its terrific power to the State, until at length the Church became the ascendant power, and ruled the world with a rod of iron. Under this ecclesiastical despotism, the nations of the civilised world groaned, and travailed in pain a thousand years.

During this long night, liberty, and virtue, and vigorous enterprise slept in chains, and were punished as felons; while no debasement, or impurity, or fraud, or cruelty which human ingenuity could invent or human power execute was unpractised. These abominations of ecclesiastical despotism have brought upon Christianity an odium, and surrounded the system with a jealousy, which the Protestant Reformation and the restoration of civil and religious liberty have not been able to wipe away. And, to this day, the disciples of those who achieved this illustrious emancipation are involved in the odium against Christianity created by the priesthood, whose horrid des-

potism their great predecessors were employed to overthrow.

3. The anti-Christian conspiracy, the long-delayed but terrific result of perverted Christianity, has given a new impulse to the cause of scepticism.

The revival of letters at the Reformation, which emancipated half Europe, produced so much light in countries where ecclesiastical dominion still maintained its empire, as rendered the darkness visible and intolerable, and produced, first, Deism, and, at length, Atheism and the French Revolution. For more than half a century the conspirators attempted, by argument and ridicule, to emancipate the people from the power of superstition and the priesthood, and the prostituted energies of civil government; until they came to the conclusion that, while irresponsible men were permitted to wield the sanctions of Christianity, there could be no liberty! and that there was no way to emancipate the nation but to obliterate all belief in the being of a God and the Bible, and to sweep away every vestige of Christianity. And this they systematically attempted, and most thoroughly accomplished, by falsehood, by ridicule, and by argument, until, aided by the corruptions of the reigning system, they succeeded in obliterating from the mind of a nation all traces of belief in the being of a God and a future state.

The explosion was terrific. It seemed, for a time, to suspend the entire action of the divine government, and overturned thrones and altars; but it blew to atoms also the conspirators, and all their chimerical hopes. It was like the uncapping of a volcano, whose fires rolled one continuous sheet of desolation over all. It was amid voices, and thunderings, and a mighty earthquake, that the tremendous system fell.

But though the effort failed to overthrow the government

of God, and the world has been warned of the terrors which await an atheistical political millennium, their specious writings still remain to pervert those who have forgotten their results. There is in them no great profundity of talent, or ground of confidence; but there is in them the best possible adaptation to unhinge and unsettle mind; and whoever reads them with implicit confidence will be subverted. Charged with ridicule, like the poisoned arrow they inflict a double death: by the stroke they destroy, and, to make assurance doubly sure, by the venom which they throw into their system they destroy.

4. The attempt to repress scepticism by authority, and the odium of hard names, has served rather to augment than to stay the malady.

It is not the plan of Heaven that truths which lie within the sphere of evidence should be obtained without mental effort. Acquisition by investigation, and delight in action, is a part of the mind's everlasting employment and blessedness. Men ought to think for themselves, as really as they ought to eat for themselves; and if, to prevent infidelity, you repress investigation, you may have uniformity, indeed, but it will be that of vacant minds. You may avert storms, but it will be to secure stagnation and putrefaction.

It is not true, however, that free and independent thought tends to infidelity. There always have been minds, and there always will be, who will not submit to dictation, or tamely commit to memory other men's opinions; and it is such men to whom the Reformation owed its birth, and from whom the Bible has received its most able defence. And if, as incident to such high action, there should be some who sometimes miss the mark, they are not to be treated as outlaws. You may intimidate the abject in this manner, but assuredly you

will raise up around the Church an army of powerful, embittered assailants, to make reprisals by the subversion of her sons. No doubt, men are accountable to God for their dangerous errors, and their mischievous tendency may properly be exposed; but it should be done in the language of compassion towards them that are out of the way, and not in the language of contempt and vituperation.

5. It is not uncommon for men to mistake their feelings of unreconciled aversion to truth for lack of evidence.

We are not satisfied, they say. We are not convinced. We are ready to believe when the evidence is sufficient. But the whole secret is, that they are not pleased. To the disobedient, law always appears unreasonable. The entire anti-social conspiracy of thieves, robbers, burglars, pickpockets, and swindlers, look upon our laws and institutions with aversion, and are deeply prejudiced and virulent in their opposition. They regard separate property and government as a usurpation, and their own disgrace and exile as an unreasonable persecution. And thus, and for the same reasons, do sinful men feel towards the government of God; and they call that insufficient evidence which fails to remove the discontented feeling.

6. Another fruitful cause of scepticism is found in the supposed irresponsibility of man for his opinions.

For that which is constitutional, instinctive, and unmodified by volition, doubtless we are not accountable; and if opinion were formed without the modifying influence of the heart, the maxim might be just. But it is not so. There is no place where passion, prejudice, interest and aversion, have more power. It is the will which sends out to summon the witnesses on one side only, or on both, as it shall decide; which shuts the eye, and stops the ear, and suspends the recording pen, and is

all awake, *currente calamo*, when the side testifies which favours inclination. It is the will which writes the testimony upon sand or upon brass, as it favours or offends. It is the will, the busy dexterity of an evil heart, which gathers up and piles into the scales all the specious arguments which favour inclination, and keeps out the arguments which would turn them against predominant desire; and when the light is too overpowering to render an erroneous verdict possible, men see, as in a glass, the truth, and straightway, from inattention, willingly forget its image and superscription, and, even where conviction maintains its empire, move the tongue in opposition to the better judgment.

Such being the meddling and powerful dexterity of the heart, it needs powerful responsibility to bind it to good behaviour. Among holy beings, responsibility is the guardian of virtuous action. Nothing in heaven thrives without it; and on earth, among alienated subjects, its cessation is desperate licentiousness. How can it be expected that men will toil through extended investigations, and hold the balance even against fear, and diversions of interest or passion, without motive? As well might morality be reconciled with total irresponsibility of action, as an enlightened and correct belief.

7. The demand of evidence on moral subjects, which the nature of mind renders impossible, is another cause of scepticism.

Why, it is said, could not God make unbelief impossible, as in consciousness and demonstration? Because the truths to be proved lie beyond the limits of consciousness, or the scope of the mind's intuition, or the cognisance of the senses. Who can demonstrate the history of the American Revolution, the adoption of the constitution, or its correct exposition? The great business of life is

guided by experiment, analogy, and testimony; and though it admits of moral certainty, it admits of prejudice, and folly, and wilful evasion. Let one of these philosophers put in practice his own maxim, and we shall perceive his folly. He sends for his physician: "Sir, can you demonstrate that I am sick, and what ails me, and what will cure me?" "Not exactly; but I perceive symptoms of indisposition upon you. I know, by observation, what disease they indicate; and, by experience, I have ascertained the remedy." "None of your quackery! I am not a man to be imposed upon! Demonstrate to me that I am sick, and what ails me, and what will cure me, or I have no further occasion for your services." He sends for his merchant: "But first I wish to be certified of the correctness of your charges. Can you demonstrate that these articles were taken?" "I can prove it by satisfactory evidence." "I shall not be satisfied by any evidence but demonstration." He sends for his attorney: "I think it probable that I may soon leave this loose-jointed world. Can you inform me how I can demonstrate my last will and testament in favour of my beloved wife and children?" "Indeed, sir, I cannot." "Then, pettifogger, leave me, as I hope soon to leave this world of visions and of doubts!"

8. The pushing of investigation without first principles, competent instruction, and study, is a fruitful cause of scepticism. The dependence of high and sublime truths on those which are obvious is such, that no man who neglects the elements of knowledge can possibly unlock and enter her secret chambers. What mind can reach the depths of the mathematics, the heights of astronomy, or the secrets of chemistry, without attending to the alphabet of these sciences? What progress has ever been made by man in knowledge but as theories have been

abandoned, and intuition, and experience, and evidence made the basis of knowledge?—and yet, without lamp, compass, or chart, or study, men plunge into the profound of theology, and grope, and rend, and involve the subject, until desperation or despondency puts an end to their fruitless labour, in a state of scepticism. It is the law of Heaven that men shall acquire knowledge on all subjects, in the first instance, by instruction, and careful, persevering mental application. But sceptical men insist on being self-taught, and that, also, without the tax of patient mental application.

9. The pushing of investigation beyond the boundaries of knowledge, is a frequent cause of discouragement and scepticism, going beyond the sphere of consciousness, or of intuition, or of the senses, into the territories of theory, and twilight, and conjecture. These, often, are men of vigorous minds and impatient desire, and, comet-like, launch forth in their fiery career; but, having gone beyond the centripetal attractions of the moral universe, they fall by their own density, and flounder amid the bogs and quagmires of chaos and old night; or, like the adventurous navigator, they launch out on an unknown sea, tempest-tossed and not comforted, ever dreaming that some land is near, and straining their sightless eyeballs upon darkness, in the constant expectation of the bursting out of some great light—to whom is still reserved the blackness of darkness. For though their strength were equal to that of Polyphemus, it is exerted, without vision, in smiting upon the waters, to raise a mist about their own heads.

10. The society of sceptical men, who are scoffers and partisans in the warfare against Christianity, is a powerful cause of scepticism.

All whose confidence in the Bible falters are not scoffers.

Many venerate Christianity, and would by no means impair its influence on other minds, who feel, and sometimes lament, the unsettled condition of their own. But there are men who are inflamed with the madness of unbelief, and who associate and systematise their efforts to undermine the confidence of the community in Christianity; and to the young who fall under their influence their words of scorn are terrific as batteries, contagious as the plague, corrosive as canker, and deadly as poison. In their associations they assail the inexperienced with false statements which they are not able to contradict, with sophistry which they cannot detect, with objections which they cannot answer, and with blasphemies, made eloquent by the inspiration of the bowl, which amaze and confound them. The den of lions and the retreat of adders and vipers are not more perilous to life than these evil communications are to a sound mind and to confidence in evidence.

Philosophy is the nature which God has given to things, as perceived by the human mind; to matter and to mind, in the endless relations of cause and effect, motive and choice. And so far as the properties and laws of created things lie within the cognisance of our faculties, they constitute the material of all knowledge, and of all experience.

The Bible itself, while it never professedly teaches, always assumes, and never contradicts, the true philosophy of things. When it describes things as they appear to the eye, the appearance corresponds with the description; when it assumes the nature, or attributes, or relations and consequences of things, observation verifies always the accuracy of the assumption. It cannot be interpreted without it, and cannot be explained in opposition to it. Indeed, the interpretation of language, as figurative or literal, turns on the known properties of the subjects

spoken of; and, of several meanings possible, the nature of the subject decides the selection.

The difficulty in the primitive age, and ever since, has been that false philosophy has been interpolated in nature's book, and the attempt pertinaciously made to accommodate the Bible to those facts which never happened, and to make those theoretical apparitions the expositions of truth; a process which has kept torture upon Holy Writ, and an earthquake in the Church, to this day; and never will the river of the water of life run pure and copious and irresistible, extending universal life in its course, till all the interpolations of a false philosophy are blotted out from nature's page, and rent from the system of interpretation and thrown away.

11. With these remarks in view, I proceed to observe that the creeds of the Reformation are often made the occasion of perplexity and doubt to inexperienced minds. They contain, unquestionably, the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, and they have stood through ages against the encroachments of error, as the iron-bound shores to the ocean. But they were constructed amidst the most arduous controversy that ever taxed the energies of man, and with the eye fixed upon the errors of the day, and on the points around which the battle chiefly raged. On some topics they are more full than the proportion of the faith now demands; some of their phraseology also, once familiar, would now, without explanation, inculcate sentiments which are not scriptural, which the framers did not believe, and the creeds were never intended to teach. They present also the results of investigations, without giving to the reader the intervening steps without which minds not favoured with leisure and undisciplined by study could not easily arrive at the conclusions.

Of course they appear rather as insulated, independent,

abstract propositions than as the symmetrical parts and proportions of a beautiful and glorious system of divine legislation, for maintaining the laws and protecting the rights of the universe, while the alienated are reconciled and the guilty are pardoned; and though, as abstract truths, correctly expounded according to the intention of the framers, they unquestionably inculcate the system of doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures; and though, as land-marks and boundaries between truth and error, they are truly important, yet, as the means for the popular exposition and the saving application of truth, they are far short of the exigencies of the day in which we live; mere skeletons of truth, compared with the system, clothed, and beautified, and inspired with life, as it exists and operates in the word of God. Unhappily, also, some of the most important truths they inculcate are, in their exposition, so twisted in with the reigning philosophy of the day as to be, in the popular apprehension, identified with it, and are made odious and repellent by its errors, as if these philosophical theories were the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. There is no end to the mischief which false philosophy, employed in the exposition and defence of the doctrines of the Reformation, has in this manner accomplished. Good men have contended for theories as if they were vital to the system, and regarded as heretical those who received the doctrine of the Bible, and only rejected their philosophy. They have cried out against and renounced philosophising, when it was their own philosophising which divided and agitated the Church. In this manner the Church has been filled with controversies, and feuds, and jealousies; and intelligent men, offended alike by absurd philosophy and unchristian controversies about it, have, in the conflict of opinion, become discouraged and disgusted, and have either adopted heretical opinions or

become sceptical. It is my deliberate opinion that the false philosophy which has been employed for the exposition of the Calvinistic system, has done more to obstruct the march of Christianity and to paralyse the saving power of the Gospel, and to raise up and organise around the Church the unnumbered multitude to behold, and wonder, and despise, and perish, than all other causes beside. There is no subject which so moves my compassion, or fills my soul with regret, or my heart with the feeling, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

Nor is it to be expected that the Gospel will ever be attended with its primitive power in sudden and numberless conversions, till it is again, as it then was, preached in demonstration of the spirit and of power, unobstructed by the clouds and darkness of a false philosophy. The points especially affected by this philosophy are vital to the principles of moral government, and involve the constitutional perceptions of truth, the universal dictates of common-sense, and the unequivocal elements of accountability, as recognised in human government, as sanctioned in the Bible, and as employed by the Holy Spirit in convincing men of sin, and of God's justice in their condemnation. If the theories of this philosophy are not absurd, nothing is absurd; and if they are not false, nothing is false; and if, according to them, the conduct of God is not indefensible and unjust, it is only because what God does is right, simply and only because he does it, and therefore nothing which he does can be unjust.

The points to which I allude, as violated by a false philosophy, are, the principles of personal identity, by which the posterity of Adam are distinct from, and not to be confounded with, their ancestor; the principles of

personal accountability and desert of punishment—that men are not made accountable and punishable for the conduct of Adam, though liable to sin and misery, as its universal consequence; the nature of sin and of holiness, considered not as material qualities or the substance of the soul, or as instincts, but as the spontaneous action of mind under moral government, in the full possession of all the elements of accountability; and, above all, the doctrine of the decrees of God, and the universal certainty of all events to his fore-knowledge: to which may be added, the nature of the atonement and its extent, and the doctrines of election and reprobation as they shine in the Bible, and not through the medium of a perverting philosophy.

Whatever of these philosophical theories appertained to the system during the arduous conflict for civil and religious liberty against the Papal despotism of modern Europe, men endured, even swallowed them unhesitatingly, almost unthinkingly, in the presence of a greater evil; but since the conflict has passed away, and the nature of mind and moral government is better understood, and the numbers who think and will think for themselves multiply, the repugnance to this false philosophy has steadily increased, and will increase, till that which is adventitious and false is relinquished, and the truth is preached in its purity and unbroken power.

12. These evils of philosophy have, however, been greatly aggravated by the caricatures of Calvinism, which on all sides have been multiplied.

I have never seen or heard a correct statement of the Calvinistic system from an opponent. Consult almost any oracle of opposition as to what is Calvinism, and the response will be, Calvinism is that horrible system which teaches that God has fore-ordained and fixed, by irresisti-

ble omnipotence, whatsoever comes to pass; that he has made a very small number of mankind on purpose to be saved, and all the rest on purpose to damn them; that an atonement by weight and measure has been made for the elect only, but which is offered to the non-elect on conditions impossible to be complied with, and they are damned for not accepting what did not belong to them, and could not have saved them if they had received it; and that infants, as well as adults, are included in the decree of reprobation, and that hell, no doubt, is paved with their bones.

It is needless to say that falsehoods more absolute and entire were never stereotyped in the foundry of the Father of Lies, or with greater industry worked off for gratuitous distribution from age to age.

13. False conceptions of the nature and prerogatives of reason have been another abundant cause of confusion and scepticism.

Reason, considered as a faculty, is the mind itself acting upon evidence and moral fitness; and that is *reasonable* which the mind perceives to be conformed to some acknowledged standard of truth or rectitude.

In the presence of competent testimony, belief is reasonable; in natural philosophy, whatever accords with the laws of matter is reasonable; in moral government and theology, whatever accords with the nature of mind and free agency, and the principles of law and moral government, is reasonable; and in relation to the comprehensive purposes of God, that plan is reasonable which will best develope his power and wisdom and goodness in the creation and government of the intelligent universe.

While correct conceptions of reason, as a faculty, prevail, and a correct standard of what is reasonable is maintained, the decisions of the mind within the sphere of its

competency may be relied on, and the maxim that nothing is to be believed which is contrary to reason, is true—meaning only, that nothing is to be believed which contradicts our consciousness, or our intuition, or our senses, or without evidence, or which is contrary to the known laws of the natural or moral world, or to those principles of order which God himself has rendered too obvious to be mistaken or controverted.

But the fact is, that loose and incorrect conceptions of reason, as a faculty of mind, prevail, and also concerning what is the external standard of what is reasonable and unreasonable.

By some, reason is deified, and clothed with a sort of unerring omniscient intuition, in respect to all sorts of matters and things; so that one of these sagacious philosophers has only to turn his sapient eye on any subject whatever, and, however recondite and profound it may be, he sees with the slightest glance what is reasonable about it, and what is absurd, and can settle it instantly with oracular certainty.

Others regard reason as a sort of moral instinct, which decides by feeling instead of eyesight, and exercises on all points an unerring discrimination.

But as to the last popular import of the term reasonable, that is sometimes what accords with the preconceived opinions of men—with what it seems to them most suitable and proper that God should do—and sometimes, it is that which corresponds with their wishes, and sits pleasantly on their feelings. Now, when such vague and false conceptions are formed of the attributes and capacities of reason, in the utter absence of all correct and definite standards of comparison, and in that outer darkness to which presumptuous men push their speculations where God reigns alone, and asks no counsel, and

gives no account of his matters, is it wonderful that men become bewildered, confounded, wearied, discouraged, and at length sceptical, from the supposed impossibility of knowing anything? When they explore the Bible and analyse the conduct of God with such false conceptions, it is not wonderful that what they meet with does not correspond with their preconceived opinions, or with their wishes, or with their feelings; and that they should be offended, and perplexed, and, in despondency of vexation, give up the knowledge of the truth as something which cannot be obtained.

14. The liberty which some nominal Christians have taken with the inspiration and exposition of the Bible has tended powerfully to undermine their own and the public confidence in the book.

Having decided by *reason* what the Bible *ought* to mean, they have attempted to make its stubborn dialect conform, and to stop its mouth where it would speak amiss, or by the rack to compel it to prophesy deceits, and—where all this will not avail—to lop off with the knife the incorrigible passages. But by the time this torturing, pruning process is ended, there is little left which the experimenter himself believes, and but little confidence in that which he affects to believe. When it has been once assumed that the Old Testament is obsolete, and filled with unworthy conceptions of God and dangerous errors; that certain portions of the New Testament are spurious, and others mistranslated; that many of the epistles are of doubtful authority, and none of them so guarded by inspiration as to exclude false reasoning, allegorising and mysticism, and accommodations to the errors and prejudices of the age; that even the gospels are not a revelation, but merely a history of one, which uninspired men wrote down as well as they could remem-

ber, but with less ability than Cicero or Socrates would have done it—they are prepared for the conclusion that there is no revelation, and that reason is man's only guide; that there is *some truth* in the Bible which was once revealed, which lies somewhere amid the rubbish of ages and the confusion of mistakes: but what it is, and where it is, reason must decide, taking up the particles of truth by its own attraction, as the magnet extracts iron from the sand. No other book could sustain its character for truth under such treatment; no other book written by men of common-sense was ever regarded as being thus incapable of definite exposition. Such uncertainty thrown upon human legislation would destroy utterly the power of civil governments. Were it announced from the bar and the bench that the obvious import of the statute-book is not the true import; that more than half of it is obsolete and filled with false principles of law; that, in the best parts, some enactments are interpolations, and others borrowed from dead languages mistranslated; that none of them are the laws of the state, but the mere *history* of laws, passed ages ago, which the bystanders *heard* enacted and wrote down for our use, according to the best of their recollection, with fewer means of accuracy than the reporters of parliamentary or congressional debates; that they have sent down to us many wise and some foolish laws, which need to be modified in accommodation to the altered state of society; and that, in discriminating between what is obsolete, and interpolated, and misremembered, and mistranslated, and what is genuine and obligatory, the bench, and the jury, and the people, must judge for themselves, following the dictates of their own reason—could the statute-book, with no more definiteness and authority, defend us against the innovations of the anti-social system? And can the Bible, as Heaven's law-book, be

treated thus, and continue to be "the law of the Lord, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord, which is pure, making wise the simple"—"the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation?" Can such loose and low opinions of the Bible be thrown out upon the community, and not subtract from the reverence and the confidence which is indispensable to render it the efficient legislation of Heaven? The results of this practice have corresponded with its tendencies. In Germany, it has brought commentator and reader to the frank, unqualified denial of the inspiration of the Bible; and in this country the same treatment of the Bible has already produced and is producing the same results.

15. Another occasion of scepticism is the confounding of the physical and moral power of God.

Physical omnipotence is the capacity of God to do whatever is, in the nature of things, possible to be done by direct power.

Moral omnipotence is the capacity of God to do, by laws and moral influence, whatever is consistent with the nature of mind, of free agency, accountability, and moral government.

He did not so make the solar system as that its government by the Ten Commandments should be a possible thing, or so constitute the mind as that choice and accountability should, by any possibility, be the result of a direct, irresistible omnipotence. But multitudes confound this distinction, and apply the attributes of physical omnipotence to the government of mind; and thus drawing inferences against the Bible, attempt to explain away its unbending orthodoxy. Why, they say, if faith is necessary, does not God make men believe? Is he not omnipotent? What need was there for an atonement? Could not God have held the heart of the universe steady,

even though he had sanctified and pardoned the guilty? Is he not almighty? Does he not desire the salvation of all, and work all things after the counsel of his own will? Why, then, will not all men be saved? Who can believe that he will punish, when his power enables him just as consistently to save? They overlook the fact, that while by simple power he controls the material universe, he must act in the government of mind by laws, and motives, and moral influence, with reference to the formation and continuance of free agency, and accountability, and character; and that to assert that God can govern mind directly, as he governs matter, is to beg the question, and deny the distinction between material and moral government, and contradict the Bible, which declares that God by the law could not, and only through the atonement could, be just, and the justifier of him that believeth.

16. Another cause of scepticism is found in mental dissipation.

There are multitudes who think incessantly, but never make the effort to methodise and digest their thoughts. They read all sorts of books, engage in all sorts of discussions, hear all sorts of preachers, vainly hoping that, in some favoured moment, Truth personified will stand before them. But as she does not appear, they let the heterogeneous mass float in upon and oppress the mind, as undigested aliment does the stomach, till fumes and debility ensue. No wonder they cannot believe anything. The animal who could not eat between two equal attractions of appetite, and at length gorged himself by eating everything within his reach, would not be in a more pitiable condition.

17. The union of Church and State in Protestant nations has been a fruitful cause of scepticism.

It was the result of an order of things which the re-

formers could not change—which, though it sometimes aided, hindered more than it helped the cause of pure religion, while to religious liberty it gave little besides the name.

It was this unhallowed alliance with the State which withdrew the eye and the heart from the protection of Heaven, to rely on an arm of flesh, and from the doctrines of Heaven to the commandments of men, and which filled up the Church with professors by subscription to creeds and conformity to ceremonies, without the evangelical qualifications of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In this bad alliance the Sabbath was profaned, and a lax morality prevailed within the sacred inclosures of the Church, and discipline was neglected, and crimes tolerated, in high places and low; while the right of presentation to the ministry by the king and nobility rendered the ministry a sinecure, and filled it not unfrequently with ignorant, vicious, and heretical men.

This preposterous exhibition of religion in alliance with the world obscured her glory, destroyed her purity, and broke her power, and emancipated men from the dominion of Christianity to fall back upon scepticism and infidelity.

In this country we have, indeed, no union of Church and State; and yet we have not escaped entirely the amalgamation of the Church and the world. Just in proportion as, on the principles of superstition, or formality, or policy, men without holiness are recognised as members of the Church of Christ, the same results will follow: a lax observance of the Sabbath, a loose morality and formal worship, antinomian fatality or Arminian laxity of doctrine, both of which alike grieve the Spirit, and abandon man to his own heart's lust. It was this

amalgamation of the Church with the world, in New England, by a profession without evidence of piety, that stopped, for seventy years, those revivals with which the colonies commenced, and which began again only with the restoration of the Scriptural tenure of membership, by a credible profession of holiness. It was this amalgamation which brought unconverted men into the ministry, and introduced first a lax Calvinism, and then Arminianism, and then Arianism, and after that Socinianism, till at length scepticism became the predominant caste of those who were not professedly evangelical.

The attempt making by some to annihilate the distinction of Church and congregation among nominal Christians, and to comprehend in one charitable fellowship entire towns, parishes, or congregations, is one of the most efficient methods which could be devised for putting out the light and paralysing the power of the Gospel, and filling the land with sceptics and infidels.

The way to prevent infidelity is not to unspiritualise Christianity, and make it simply a religion of forms and movable terms, so accommodating that unholy men shall find neither reproof nor repellency—not so to bring down the Church, and its doctrine and discipline, that infidels may find themselves well qualified and acceptable brethren, without any change of sentiment or practice.

Men of sense despise such temporising policy. They know that religion is either a matter of vast magnitude or nothing; and since these teachers reduce it so nearly to a cipher, they choose to go for the whole, and regard it all as a fable.

If you search the congregations of the whole nation, you will find scepticism to predominate more in those places where the claims and sanctions of the Gospel have been brought down to the lowest, and the difference

between Christian and infidel so narrowed down that, in the conjunction, it would be difficult to decide whether Christianity had been converted to infidelity, or infidelity to Christianity.

18. Not a few are rendered sceptical by the protracted habit of believing the truth without obeying it.

The snares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, spring up, and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. In this condition of unproductive hearing, while the world rises in relative estimation, the concerns of eternity recede and disappear. The result is a growing insensibility of mind to evidence. The being of God, and the inspiration of the Bible, and the realities of the eternal state, though certified by evidence more luminous and powerful than ever was concentrated on any other subject, assume the position of believed but unrealised truths, like those distant orbs of heaven whose light, as yet, has not reached the earth. The man has a respect for religion and its institutions; and, under the power of conscience, there is at times solemnity, and impression, and many good wishes, and half-formed resolutions, and earnest desires, and sad regrets, and many fears, and many hopes of being and doing better. But this, at length, becomes an irksome state. The wane of life and the approaching shades of evening warn the subject that his days are almost numbered, and that eternity is near. He would prefer becoming a Christian by regeneration, if he thought he could, but begins to fear that he never shall; wishes there might be some other way, hopes there may be, and begins to look around with exploring eye to see if there is not. And immediately, as eagles gather about the slain, temptations gather about the ruined man, and volunteer their aid. And now the truth, heard before

with patience, begins to become irksome and painful, and he hears with the reaction of excited sensibility. He believes, to be sure; but then the doctrines are preached too much, or with too much terror, or too much earnestness, or too much severity, or personality of reference. He wishes that ministers would preach the relative duties more, and the doctrines less. Still it is slowly that education, and conscience, and habit let go. In times of peril, and of quickened attention to religion, conscience awakes, and drives out the intrusions of doubt, and shakes his soul with salutary fear. He trembles, relents, and is almost persuaded to become a Christian; but the elastic cord which binds him only yields to the pressure, but does not break, and, when the momentary effort has passed by, returns to its strength. And now the alternative becomes imperious of meeting or disbelieving the terrors of the future state; and finally he determines, if possible, to disbelieve. A large proportion of the virulent opponents of evangelical doctrine and the Bible are men who were once nominal believers, and had, at some period of their lives, been seriously awakened about the concerns of their souls, until despondency, and guilt, and fear made them sceptics.

19. Undefined and unworthy conceptions of experimental religion, as associated with the weaknesses and extravagances of indiscreet and fanatical good men, are the occasions of uncertainty and doubt to many minds.

I do not regard as fanaticism a sudden and deep sense of guilt and danger, falling upon many minds at the same time, and followed speedily with filial sorrow for sin, and affectionate reliance on the Saviour, and a life subsequently consecrated to his service. I have reference to great excitement where there is little knowledge; to excessive, unregulated, tumultuous feeling—superseding dis-

cretion, and enlisting the animal susceptibilities, and nervous excitement, and spiritual pride—regardless alike of spiritual restraint and the decorum of civilised social intercourse. When such whirlwinds of wildfire break out among wood, and hay, and stubble, it is called by some a revival of religion; but though there should be some religion amid the vast disorder, I call it fanaticism, and the real religion of it is like a few kernels of wheat amid mountains of chaff, set on fire and blown about by furious winds. It is owing to such excesses that lasting associations of odium are attached to revivals, even where no such exhibitions are witnessed, and where the effects are pure and undefiled religion.

20. Another cause of scepticism is found in dissolute habits.

The process is short and obvious. The conflict between the man's practice and his conscience is too severe to be permanently endured. One or the other must conform, or there can be no peace. To relinquish his guilty pleasures and sinful ways he is not prepared. These he will not give up; and therefore his only alternative is to deceive himself, and still his conscience by false testimony. This commonly is attempted at first by an endeavour so to expound the Bible as that it shall speak peace to the wicked. But it is formed of such unbending materials that, though bent out of the way, like the elastic bow it flies back the moment the constraining force relaxes. If wrested, it requires too much watching and holding wrong to consist with convenience and comfort; for though, with great effort, it may be stretched upon the rack, and compelled to prophesy peace to the wicked, no sooner are the engines of torture relaxed than it thunders out again, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The Bible, therefore, to a vicious man, is a most terrific book; with

all he can do, and with all the help he can obtain to explain it away, it keeps him in constant alarm. Like the fires of a volcano, it burns fiercely beneath his feet, and keeps up a dreadful sound in his ears, and shakes his soul with reiterated and unsubdued alarms, until, in weariness, and vexation, and desperation, he turns furiously, and rushes, *vi et armis*, upon his unrelenting tormentor. And now he stands erect, and sets his mouth against the heavens, and his foot on all which is pure and holy; and calls it emancipation, and the triumph of reason over education, and superstition, and priestcraft.

Before the epidemic of infidelity passed over our land, nearly all the vicious were condemned to do penance for their crimes, by a nominal belief in Christianity, and the retributions of a future state; but since that event nearly every man and woman of dissolute habits had secretly or openly renounced the Bible, and joined the sceptical caste. One illustration of this kind may stand for thousands. A youth, religiously educated, comes in quest of employment from the country to one of our great cities. His principles are unperverted, his breath is pure, his morals are uncorrupt, his conscience is tender, and all his habits are good. But he is a stranger; and in his vacant moments, far from parents and friends, is solitary. He falls, at length, into the society of amiable, polite, and courteous young men; but, alas! adepts in the wiles of temptation and the practices of evil, they spread the snare for his feet, and dig the pit for his downfall. At first he is shocked, and recoils; and they, nothing daunted, renew their assiduities, and let fall upon his ear their sympathy for his faintness of heart and superstitious fears. Their sophistry and cavils distil as dew upon him, and their sarcasm eateth as doth a canker. By little and little his heart receives the shock with less repellency; and as he sees that

they eat and do not die, and hears them boasting of their liberty, the young unhallowed desire begins to rise in his bosom; and as conscience falters and his fears subside, in evil hour he consents to the enticement, and is undone. Still, for a season, a wounded conscience pains him, and he passes sleepless nights and days of woe. "Oh that I had never left the abodes of purity, and come to this guilty city! Oh that I had resisted and burst away when I faltered and was almost persuaded to do so! O my mother! what wouldst thou say didst thou know what thy son is doing? O my sister, didst thou see what thy brother has become, how would thy pure heart bleed!" But the net is upon him, and he struggles only to draw closer the toils about him. The stream is rolling on with a broader, deeper tide, which he resists with a feebler arm, till, in desperation, resistance ceases, and he goes downward in the full career of augmenting crime. At length his guilty pleasures surpass his income, and, to meet the deficiency, he borrows of his employer. Yes, he borrows—without leave, indeed, but to repay; he borrows again, and repeats the loan, till repayment becomes impossible; and at length detection and shame burst upon him. And now his character is gone, his prospects in life are blasted, and he becomes misanthropic and desperate. He will not reform, and he cannot endure the hell which the truth believed kindles in his bosom, and resolves to bury his wretchedness in the ruins of his faith. He calls to his aid Hume, and Paine, and Volney, and Voltaire, and Owen, and Wright, and becomes a sceptic; and between the gambling-table and the brothel, and the midnight enterprises of the anti-social band and the jail, he spends his days, till at length the hand of justice overtakes him, and he dies in a halter.

21. I will only add that implicit confidence in great

and learned men who have been unbelievers is a frequent cause of scepticism.

For though there is no class of men who boast more of free and independent thought than sceptics, there are, in fact, few men who think less, or rely with a more tame, implicit, unthinking confidence on the opinion of others. They assume that these great men have examined the subject thoroughly and candidly on both sides, and that where such minds have been unable to find competent evidence to rest their faith upon it must be that there is none. But all these premises, so important to the conclusion, are assumed without evidence, and falsely. The instance is probably yet to be found of a sceptic who had soberly, and carefully, and candidly examined both sides; who had studied the history, and design, and evidence, and exposition of the Bible. Many who have undertaken to read it, only to find armour against it, have been cured of their scepticism; but I do not believe a well-authenticated instance can be found of a sceptic who was a good biblical scholar, and who studied thoroughly the Bible and its evidences, and remained a sceptic. But, if it were so, it would be nothing to be relied on; while of men of great mind and learning a hundred to one read and are convinced. Great minds have also great and evil hearts, powerful passions, great vices of life, and great aversion to the truth, and violent prejudices against it, and an indomitable pride, revolting against the duty of becoming little children, that they may enter the kingdom of God. The children of our Sabbath-schools, of twelve years of age, are probably much better acquainted with the history, and doctrines, and evidences of the Bible, than the ablest deists who have poured forth torrents of scorn and invective against it. Nothing, therefore, is more weak, and foolish, and perilous, than the scepticism which is

inspired by confidence in perverted talent, and unapplied knowledge, and the decisions of ignorance, prejudice, and hatred against the word of God.

In respect to the remedy for scepticism, there are two courses. One is the concentration of the mind upon admitted truths, with reference to the immediate exercise of right affections.

The knowledge requisite to the exercise of the affections is far short of that which is demanded to settle all the difficulties and remove all the doubts of a speculating mind; and correct affections in view of truth are practicable, while many clouds hang over particular departments of the great subject. A man may understand and approve the vital parts of the constitution of the United States, long before he has studied and made up his mind on every particular; and his patriotic approbation of what he does understand will aid him in the study and comprehension of the rest. In like manner, when the heart shall render to God the homage of love and confidence, gratitude and obedience, in view of such exhibitions of his character, and word, and ways, as are comprehended, and entitled to affectionate confidence, three-fourths of all the speculative difficulties will pass away as the mists recede before the rising sun, and those which linger will be soon adjusted.

To accomplish this result, however, a rigid inhibition must be laid upon the habit of speculation. For the present, it must be stopped, and the whole soul be turned from the effort at knowing everything to the effort at doing the will of God, as far as known; and to this end the Bible should be devoutly read, with a simple reference to understanding and obeying the claims of God upon the heart. Let a careful non-intercourse be maintained with all associates who would divert your mind;

bring around you the society of intelligent Christian friends; and give yourself, at stated times daily, to retirement, the reading of the Scriptures, and fervent prayer for guidance and illumination. Attend statedly also upon the public worship of God; and be careful to avoid every practice which would do violence to your conscience, and to preserve unbroken, and with increasing vigour, all your serious mental associations; and daily, and often as the knowledge of duty breaks in upon your mind, do it. Give to God the affections of your soul, and consecrate yourself to his service. Exercise ingenuous sorrow for your sins, and rely affectionately upon the Saviour.

The chief difficulty you will have to encounter will be the mental effort to begin, and the difficulty and irksomeness of a first attempt to fix your thoughts upon an unwelcome and long-neglected subject. It is this reluctance of the mind to give itself immediately to the subject, and the faintness of heart incident to the early stages of effort, upon which temptation concentrates its power to produce indefinite procrastination and doubt. But decision will soon be followed with augmented power of resolved purpose, with diminished resistance, and with the increased influence of the Spirit, till, by the divine blessing, you come to a calm, intelligent, delightful consecration of all your powers to him who loved you and gave himself to die for your sins.

The course here recommended is not a mere theory, but a practical prescription, often repeated, and never, to my knowledge, without auspicious results. I have known young men of literary distinction and sceptical habits, who obtained quickly in this way permanent satisfaction, which years of discussion and mental scrutiny had failed to bestow; and veterans in sceptical debate I have known

who, by a devout communion with their own hearts and the Bible, have come into the possession of abiding confidence and tranquillity of mind. These results are doubtless an illustration of the promise, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," and of what is meant by becoming a little child, in order to enter the kingdom of God. The man who will not obey the Gospel till he can comprehend everything which appertains to the vast system will probably never obey it; while he whose heart follows with equal steps the movements of his understanding, may hope to find his path shining more and more to the perfect day.

There are, however, some minds of such a temperament, and of such inflexible habits, as may render the total inhibition of speculation extremely difficult. In such a case, while I would still urgently recommend the preceding course in respect to the devout discipline of the heart, by reading, and prayer, and efforts to feel right, there would seem to be a necessity of referring the mind also to the elementary principles of accountability and moral government. These are the pillars of the temple, without which it is but a heap of splendid ruins; and no one can be conversant with sceptical minds and not perceive their deficiency in elementary knowledge and exact definitions. They always include some positions at variance with the principles of moral government, and leave out principles which are indispensable to a just conception of the subject; and, like missing a figure in an arithmetical process, it vitiates the result. But the mistake having been made and persisted in, and incorporated in every train of thought, is not likely to be detected by the subject alone. The aid of some intelligent friend is needed, who, in a free conversation, may point out the false assumptions, and supply the deficiencies, and put the definitions and reason-

ings in order; and generally they will move on unbiassed to a delightful result of mental satisfaction. The elementary principles of the Christian system are, like the elements of all the great works of Heaven, few, obvious, and of sublime simplicity; and I have never known them disencumbered and fairly presented to the minds of sceptical men without gratifying results.

These elements of theology are comprehended in just conceptions of the decrees of God, as having for their object an intelligent universe, composed of free agents, and governed by perfect laws perfectly administered, including the remedial system for the maintenance of law, and the reformation and forgiveness of the guilty. They are easily understood; and when these great lights in the moral heavens arise, they dispel all darkness and perplexity and doubt. The temptations to atheism and fatalism, and to heresy and error, pass away; and reason, acting upon correct premises, arrives with ease and delight at consistent and satisfying results. The conscience does its office; the heart feels its accountability, and obligation, and guilt; and, by the power of truth and the Holy Spirit, the will signifies its adhesion, and the affections flow forth in those channels of benevolence and complacency which Heaven has provided for obedient minds.

It is not enough, however, that the mind, long vexed and bewildered, should be guided once only through the labyrinth out of the wilderness into the open field and the light of day. The perceptions of the way might become dim, or the memory of old associations might return, to bias and bewilder the mind. The process should be travelled over in the society of experienced friendship, till the truth becomes familiar, till all its impressions remain, and its light shines serenely, and all the perverting associations of error fall as scales from the eyes and chains

from the soul. And with such aid, where the commitment of party, and the pride of reason, or malignant animosity, or inveterate vicious habits, do not prevent, the result is as sure as anything which depends on the unperverted action of evidence and moral influence upon the human mind.

Where no such guidance of experienced friendship can be had, no alternative remains but to add to the first prescription, inflexibly adhered to, the careful study of the best elementary authors on mental philosophy, and moral government, and the evidences of Christianity. This, though a somewhat protracted and laborious course, is the only alternative, and is justified and enforced by the immensity of the interest at stake.

Paley's "Natural Theology" stands unrivalled as a neat, copious, conclusive argument of the existence and operation of the omniscient design, almighty power, and unmingled benevolence of an eternal mind. But for just and comprehensive views of the first principles of religion, the "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion," by Butler, is probably unrivalled by any product of the human mind; and, studied thoroughly, and honestly, and prayerfully, by any mind of sufficient power to be entitled to speculate at all, will guide it out of darkness into light.

The motives to adopt some course to alleviate and confirm a wavering mind are numerous and powerful.

Scepticism is a condition empty of enjoyment, and attended with great mental desolation. Sceptical men are never satisfied with their speculations, and are never happy, and are often miserable. The mind was made for the acquisition of knowledge; and that knowledge concerning which they doubt—the being, character, law, and government of God—is of all knowledge the most interesting in itself, and the most important. Scepticism,

therefore, dooms the intellect to sterility and famine, and the heart to vacancy, and the soul to suspense, on this most important subject.

It is also an entirely gratuitous deprivation of good, and endurance of evil.

The reiterated complaint that there are so many opinions on the subject that nothing can be known, is as unfounded as it is pusillanimous. Were opinions the only source of knowledge, and to be weighed by the pound, or to be counted by the dozen, to decide by the suffrage of number what is true, the conclusion might be well founded; but facts and evidence are the material of knowledge, and the elementary truths of revelation are just as plain, and their results just as easily attained and just as satisfactory and certain, as on any other subject. On the same condition that knowledge can be obtained in natural philosophy, it can be obtained in theology. Honest, persevering application is the universal condition of knowledge in every department of the kingdom of God; and the theological department is just as accessible to study, and just as certainly rewards industry, as any other. At the entrance it is written—"If thou shalt incline thine ear to wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."*

By far the greatest portion of intelligent minds who have candidly and thoroughly investigated have escaped indecision and doubt; and multitudes, by the same means, have emerged from darkness and come into the possession of a settled confidence. It were a libel on Heaven to suppose that it has thrown wide open all the avenues of

* Prov. ii. 2—5.

natural knowledge and lit up lamps about them, and shrouded with impenetrable darkness the threshold of moral government—the gateway of eternity. God is not the author of scepticism. He has not thrust out orbs of intelligence to roll about him in blackness or darkness. It is his desire to manifest himself to the minds which he has made, by pouring out floods of light around him, through the medium of his works and his word ; and the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err.

To every sceptical man, I would say, then, in conclusion, the subjects upon which your mind wavers are too important to be permitted to hang in doubt. You cannot prove that there is no God, or that the soul is not immortal, and accountable, and depraved, needing an atonement and sanctification to escape everlasting ruin and obtain eternal life. But, before you reject the subject, you ought to be well ascertained that the inspiration of the Bible and its representations of human character and the future state are NOT true. Were your titles to your earthly estate doubtful, that fact would wake up all your energies to put the matter out of doubt. If you had as much evidence in the night that your house were on fire, as you have that you are a sinner, and that God will by no means clear the guilty, would you cry, "Peace !" and sleep on, because you did not know to a certainty that it was your house which was burning ? Would you pass a road, beset probably with robbers, because you had some doubts whether they would be there or not ? If you had as much evidence of poison in your cup as you have that Christianity is true and scepticism ruinous, would you drink because you did not certainly know that there was death in it ? It is not enough that you do not know the Bible to be true. You ought to know it to be false before you reject it : seeing, if it is false, nothing is lost ; and all is lost if it be true, and you reject it.

LECTURE III.

THE PERILS OF ATHEISM TO THE NATION.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

SUCH are the men whose assault upon Christianity was predicted eighteen hundred years ago, and fulfilled by the atheistic conspiracy in France, against the being and government of God. The result terrified the world, and sent the experimentalist howling out of time, or crying to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them.

Recently the disciples of this school, imported and indigenous, having recovered from their panic, wish to repeat their experiment upon our republican institutions. For even here the conjunction of circumstances is not right. Religion and law, those cancers of the body politic, remain, and need to be removed, that healthful atheistic liberty may, in its deeds of glory, rival all the past achievements of earth and heaven. It is not my purpose to insinuate that all men who are sceptical, or who are deists, or that even all who may doubt or disbelieve the being of a God, have a distinct participation in the views and plans of political atheists, or are debased by the loathsome pro-

fligacy which characterises generally the real adepts in this crusade against human and divine institutions. There are many whom the influence of Christianity has kept back from presumptuous sins, and who, by their past habits and existing alliances, would be withheld from an attempt to turn the world upside down; and I am not surprised at the incredulity expressed by some as to the reality of a conspiracy in our land against the being of God, and our civil, and social, and religious institutions. I can only say that in Boston and New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and through New England and the Middle States, such an organisation was as open and as well known as that of Christian Churches, and no formal proof was needed at the time these lectures were delivered. Their plans were avowed in their books, and tracts, and newspapers, and inculcated in their temples of reason, discussed in their weekly meetings, and threatened as an achievement which was near, even at the door.

It was boasted that in Boston there were six hundred men on their side, ready to pledge their property for the propagation of their principles; and they actually petitioned the legislature for the charter of a college, to be established under their auspices. Of this combination many were young men, whose perversion extended sorrow and alarm through the city, and created for a time that kind of febrile action which precedes contempt of law, and insurrection. About this time the female apostle of atheistic liberty visited the city, and her lectures were thronged, not only by men, but even by females of respectable standing. And the effect of these lectures on such listeners was not the mere gratification of curiosity. She made her converts; and that, too, not among the low and vicious alone. Females of education and refinement, females of respectable standing in society, those who had been the

friends and associates of my own children, were numbered among her votaries, and advocated her sentiments.

In New York the effects of such efforts were still greater. Under the imposing title of "the working-men," the campaign was opened at the polls, and in some wards the atheistic ticket came near to succeeding. About the same time a society of philanthropists published a report on the miserable condition of abandoned females in the city, which produced a public meeting, attended by such high threats and furious denunciations, and emanations of atheistic liberty, and indications of popular fury, as threatened to supersede the protection of law, and to expose men of self-denying benevolence to personal violence.

Such also, for a time, was the influence of the invidious distinction between working-men and others, and of the infidel trumpet-call to all the envious and vicious poor, that, to my certain knowledge, serious apprehension was felt by the most judicious and sagacious men, and measures were adopted to balance these invidious associations of working-men by other associations of correct principles, and thus to paralyse their power; and by lyceums, and libraries, and public lectures, to draw the youthful population of our cities from such pernicious influence to the paths of real science and virtue. It was as a humble effort in this countervailing movement that these lectures were composed and delivered, in which, at the time, no one supposed that the writer did "so fight as one that beateth the air."

The unholy alliance has, I doubt not, felt the results of these various efforts in the reaction of a virtuous public sentiment, and has been restrained. But they are not disbanded; they have not abandoned their object. Their books, and tracts, and newspapers, are still at work, and they are waiting only the recurrence of such a moral at-

mosphere as may favour the bursting out of the contagion with new virulence and power.*

It is the testimony of the female champion of atheistic liberty, whose opportunity to feel the pulse of moral evil in the nation was unequalled, and whose spirit-stirring eloquence was well calculated to apply the torch to the concealed train, that atheistical education must and will come, either by public suffrage or by revolution.

I wish it, however, to be understood, that it is not so much the power of this organisation as to its numerical force, or even its influence at the polls directly, that is to be feared, as its effect in creating and extending a poisonous leaven, which gradually and silently, but really and effectually, shall undermine the faith and moral principle of the nation, and prepare society for dissolution, which, in some eventful crisis, may suspend the attraction of the divine government, and cut the cords which bind us together as a nation.

Their numbers, however, are not to be despised, including those who are intelligently committed, and those whose hearts and habits of evil so sympathise with them as to fall into and swell the channel of their river, by a natural affinity and a copious flood. Were all whom their designs and a coincidence of favouring circumstances might bring under their influence drawn out, it would develope a terrific numerical and physical power. The wisdom of

* The existence of an extensive atheistic conspiracy in Germany, and other parts of Europe, following in the wake of pantheism, is too well known by all intelligent men to need any enlarged statement. Interesting particulars on this point are given in a recent letter of Professor Alexander, of Princetown, in the *N. Y. Observer*. A large body of European population in some of our leading cities are in perfect sympathy with this European movement. In Cincinnati, certain rationalistic Germans have avowed their purpose to abolish the Sabbath, and have commenced public banquets and theatrical exhibitions on that day.

God is in nothing more conspicuous than in the maintenance of his cause against vast majorities often of infuriated opposition, by keeping back the bad affinities from an organised concentration.

It is the tendency, then, of political atheism, to prostrate our republican institutions, which I am to illustrate in this lecture—the tendency to stimulate and augment the powers of evil, and to suspend the restraining action of the divine government, until self-government becomes impossible, and revolution and anarchy follow, and a despotic government closes the scene.

And whether man be regarded as a mere machine, and motive as acting on mechanical principles, or whether he be considered as a free, accountable, immortal mind, acting under the responsibilities of eternity, political atheism must differ in its results immensely from Christianity, and its influence be most baleful; for if it is by motive, as a mechanical power, that he is moved to good and deterred from evil, what is the motive of a momentary existence, to an existence without end? A drop to the ocean—an atom to the universe. But if mind is voluntary and accountable in its action, and motive is the good or evil associated by a divine constitution with holiness or sin, through endless ages, then is the power of the divine government proportioned to the strength of desire for good and aversion to evil, and to the magnitude, and certainty, and duration of its rewards and its penalties. Atheism, then, lets out a race of famished, infuriated animals, goaded by instinct, and unrestrained by prospective hopes and fears, to rend and devour, and destroy and be destroyed, as one class of insects sweeps away another. How can a republic of such animals be sustained, which no eye of God inspects, no law restrains, upon which no hope of eternity dawns, and no fear darkens?

The necessity of intelligence and virtue to the perpetuity of republican liberty is as real as it is proverbial. Despotism may coerce the obedience of dark, ferocious mind against inclination, and lay its heavy hand upon the boiling wrath within. But in republics public sentiment will rule; and what will that public sentiment be which emanates from the heart of man unchastened by the hopes and fears of eternity, and undirected by coercive human laws, and not humanised by the kind affinities of the family, and unstimulated to industry by the charm of personal acquisition, possession, and enjoyment? Naked, ferocious human nature, conglomerated and condensed, in respect to all its tendencies to evil. Rivers do not more copiously and irresistibly bear onward their burden to the ocean, nor does the rock, loosed from the cliff, with more certain desolation thunder down the precipice, than man, tempted and unrestrained, rushes on to dissipation and ruin.

All governments originate in the necessities of self-defence against the violent evil propensities of man. Walled cities, armies, navies, and notes of hand and bonds, and prisons and death, are memorials indicative of the indomitable propensity of man to evil. It is but a little, too, which law can preserve and protect from ingenious fraud or successful violence. It has no sleepless omniscient eye, no omnipresent, omnipotent arm. Such delinquents only can be punished as can be arrested and convicted by a regular process of evidence. A government is needed to corroborate the public laws of men, which can look in upon the heart, and intimidate and stifle the young desire of evil, which can rouse up fear about the path of guilt, and tranquillise the madness of the heart.

Pagan legislators felt the necessity of such aid; and,

bad as were the characters of their fictitious divinities, the sanctions of their religion were a blessing compared with the philosophy of Epicurus, which turned off from the world the inspection of the gods and the retributions of the future state. Its prevalence in Greece caused her downfall, and, in the Roman empire, was followed by the extinction of Roman patriotism, and by that enervating voluptuousness which undermined the republic and introduced the despotism of the Cæsars. It was an era of mad ambition, and revolution, and proscription, and blood—a political earthquake, from which the republic never recovered, and whose agitations ceased not till she sought repose in the calm of despotism. Among the Jews, the reign of the same philosophy was to morals what the reign of the plague is in a great city—everything good died in its pestilent atmosphere, while all which was evil grew rank and abundant.

There never has been but one government professedly atheistic. The National Assembly of France, in the commencement of the Revolution, appointed a committee to inquire and report whether there were a God; and the committee reported that there could be no liberty on earth while there was believed to be a God in heaven, and that there is no God, and that death is an eternal sleep. The Assembly adopted the report, abolished the Sabbath, burnt the Bible, instituted the decade, and ordained the worship of the Goddess of Liberty in the person of a vile woman. But the consequences were too terrible to be endured; it converted the most polished nation in Europe into a nation of fiends and furies, and the theatre of voluptuous refinement into a stall of blood. The mighty Mind who governs the universe—whose being they had denied, whose word they had burnt, whose worship they had abolished, whose protection they had rejected, and

whose wrath they defied—withdrew his protection and gave them up; and, with the ferocity of famished tigers, they fastened on each other's throats and commenced the work of death, till, quickly, few were left alive to tell the tale of woe. And yet this dreadful experiment these men would repeat upon us. The entire corroborating action of the government of God, with all its satellite institutions, they would abolish, to let out upon society in wrath, without mixture and without measure, the impatient depravity of man.

The family—the foundation of the political edifice, the methodiser of the world's business, and the mainspring of its industry—they would demolish. The family—the sanctuary of the pure and warm affections, where the helpless find protection, the wretched sympathy, and the wayward undying affection, while parent hearts live to love, and pray, and forgive—they would disband and desecrate. The family—that school of indelible early impression and of unextinguished affection—that verdant spot in life's dreary waste, about which memory lingers—that centre of attraction, which holds back the heady and high-minded, and whose cords bring out of the vortex the shipwrecked mariner, after the last strand of every other cable is parted—these political Vandals would dismantle. The fire on its altars they would put out; the cold hand of death they would place on the warm beatings of its heart; to substitute the vagrancy of desire, the rage of lust, and the solitude, and disease, and desolation, which follow the footsteps of unregulated nature, exhausted by excess.

The possession of the soil in fee simple, which to industry is like the action of the sun to the movements of the heavenly bodies, they would exchange for the common field, where men perform their tasks, and receive their rations, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and die; while

infancy is committed to the tender mercies of state nurseries, in which, during the experiment in France, about nine out of ten died—a system which, by infanticide and disease, had, in half a century, reduced by one-half the population of the Sandwich Islands, and, were it to be universal and permanent, would, in a few centuries, nearly depopulate the earth.

Thus would political atheism suspend the kind attractions of Heaven upon us, and let out the storm of guilty passion, and, by one disastrous wave, from stem to stern make a clear breach over us, sweeping away what patriots, and Christians, and Heaven have done to render us happy.

It would unspiritualise our souls, cut off eternity from our being, to hang its leaden weights upon the wheels of our machine till it run down and stop for ever. It would teach us to regard accountability as a fiction, and right and wrong as obsolete terms, without use or meaning; while, with signal consistency, it anathematised the ministry of Christ, eulogised the most abominable crimes, and covered the most exalted virtues with contempt and obloquy.

The entire system is constructed for the accommodation of the most disgusting licentiousness, and produces the most fearful paroxysms of infuriated depravity. It reduces man to be the insect of a day, and renders murder an event of no more magnitude than the killing of a fly. "What is it to kill a man?" said one of these atheistic philosophers, while the work of death was going on, and the blood was flowing from the guillotine as from an inexhaustible fountain; "only just to change the direction of a few ounces of blood!" And so, in the progress of the revolution which they contrived and let out upon the world, they changed, in about five millions of instances, the direction of a few ounces of blood.

But more than sufficient has been said to establish the Vandal tendency of political atheism upon our republican institutions. If the iron governments of Europe, justified by age, custom, power, and the sanctions of eternity, perverted to sustain them, could not stand, how shall we of yesterday escape, should the action of the same baleful cause be concentrated upon us? To us it would be like the falling of the dam, and the desolation of the unobstructed flood—like the extinction of the orb of day—like the suspension of gravity and the reign of chaos.

It is not so difficult, however, to convince you of the tendencies of political atheism as it is to awaken any suitable apprehension of any real danger from the concentrated, indefatigable, and extended action of these men; the very enormity of the system tending to inspire incredulity. Bad, indeed, you are prepared to say, is the system—blasphemous—detestable; but what can such men do—mere visionaries, fools, and madmen? No doubt this testimony is true. But if you possessed indubitable evidence of a conspiracy formed to burn the good city of Cincinnati, composed only of visionaries, fools, and madmen, would you sell your engines, and disband your fire-companies, and go to sleep, because there were no honest and sober men among them? Who are better qualified than visionaries and madmen to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death?

But surely the absurdity of the system must be its antidote.

Alas! Does the history of the world prove that absurdity is an efficacious antidote to error? What absurdities can be conceived greater than men have swallowed in all ages? They are not delicate about the dose, provided its lethean power puts conscience to sleep, and reconciles impunity with crime.

But the system can never prevail. It contains the elements of its own destruction. It would depopulate the world. I know it; but millions, in the mean time, may perish, as millions did perish in France, in the making of the abortive experiment. The philosophists of France believed and taught that the emptying of the earth of one entire generation would be a cheap price for the achievement of atheistic liberty, and they sacrificed hecatombs, and at last discovered that atheism leads to despotism, and not to liberty.

But in our country, these philosophers are, to be sure, weak, misguided, and visionary, yet they are not ferocious, but mild, polite, well-meaning, honest men. And so, with few exceptions, they were in France, till blood began to flow; and then, like the tame lion who has tasted blood, they were furies; while from morning till night, and from night to morning, the guillotine groaned with its labour, and wore off its edge in its bloody work. There is no ferocity which is equal to that which prevails where the madness of licentious liberty predominates, and the fear of God and the protection of law fail in the presence of an atheistic mob.

But in this country it is not proposed to revolutionise by force, but by public sentiment, till it shall speak out at the polls. And so they proposed to do in France, and drew some honest men into their alliance. But when the *crevasse* was opened, it ran blood instead of water; and though to open it were easy, to close it surpassed their power.

But the people of this country are too enlightened ever to become the dupes of such folly.

No doubt of it; if they will consent to open their eyes upon the menacing evil, and to concentrate upon it the withering power of public indignation and stern resistance.

But who can say that an organised band, winding their dark way, and watching their opportunity in some eventful crisis of national peril, may not, in evil hour, fall on a moment when a spark upon the train may be irretrievable ruin? And who would trust good-natured, visionary incendiaries about the magazine? And who would sleep over such a mine?

But their numbers are too small, and their influence too contemptible, to justify apprehension.*

The number of vicious, unprincipled, and ambitious, and desperate, and reckless men, of whose influence, through various bad affinities, they might avail themselves, is not small. And scepticism is now the epidemic of the world, as superstition was in the dark ages; and if, under the favour of the one, Peter the Hermit stirred up a crusade for the cross, it ought to be remembered that, under the other epidemic, Voltaire, with equal power, stirred up a crusade against it.

A republic whose constituents are intelligence and virtue affords the most perfect condition of human society; but it is the most delicate, and complex, and perilous, and difficult of preservation, and facile of destruction; and when it falls, there is no chaos so dark and dreadful as the anarchy which follows. Well might the angel sent down to announce the plagues of revolution utter with a loud voice the reiterated cry, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" Of all the materials which God has made, mind, no doubt, is the most powerful, and, in its disordered state, the most ungovernable and terrible; for, though in great masses, and under mild and efficient supervision, like the mirror surface of the ocean in a calm, it reflects back upon the heavens the images of its beauty—in a moment, should these safe-

* Every year since this was written has augmented their numbers.

guards fail, the breath of some pestilent wind may rave over it, and wreck the treasures which are carried upon its bosom. The cloud as a man's hand, then, ought to be watched; and every individual with dark lantern wending his secret way to the magazine should be stopped and interrogated.

It is not, then, by a numerical majority at the polls only that this atheistic conspiracy may destroy us. They may create a pestilent atmosphere, and send out moral contagion, and blow blasting and mildew from between their shrivelled lips. They may poison the fountains, and fever the heart, and madden the brain of the nation. They may suspend on the mass of minds those moral attractions of heaven without which society will dissolve, as organic matter would should the attraction of gravity and cohesion cease. Let the belief and feeling of accountability fail from the public mind, and poverty, and envy, and ambition, and lust, be summoned to a crusade against religion, purity, property, and law, and how long would the police of our cities protect us? How soon would the laws of the land be cobwebs, and crime roll over us its wave of desolation, as once the waters of the flood swept over the earth?

I am not an alarmist, to proclaim danger when there is none, nor a false prophet, to conceal it when it approaches. I trust that my country will live, and rise to a glorious immortality. But if she should fall on evil times and be ruined, while the fires of her burning ascend, and the fragments of her wreck are passing by, and the chains of her sons going to captivity are riveting, I intend to be able to retain the consolation of Hector amid the ruins of burning Troy:

> Si Pergama dextra
> Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.

The relations of the divine government to republican institutions, the absolute necessity of an all-pervading moral influence, and the certain direful consequences of an exclusive prevalent leaven of infidelity, are, I am persuaded, but imperfectly and to a very limited extent understood. It is my purpose to give the subject a thorough discussion, as associated with the open, avowed purpose of a class of men to set aside utterly the government of God, the existence of marriage and of separate property, and the influence of all our political institutions.

Let the means and their adaptation to the end be well considered: tracts, and lectures, and paragraphs, and treatises, addressed to those principles of human discontent and insubordination in the masses which have rendered it difficult to protect life and property, and maintain the peace and order of society, recognising their misery, sympathising with them in their wrongs, and inflaming by argument and by ridicule their envy, and pride, and rage—tracts filled with specious cavils, and popular sophistry, and undermining scepticism, eradicating conscience and principle, and inspiring ridicule and blasphemy, and the most unlimited licentiousness—directed especially to the uninformed and unevangelised portion of our population in city and country, on the farm, and in the workshop and manufactory, swarming, like the frogs of Egypt, from the centre to the circumference of our land—designed and eminently calculated to divide society against itself by fostering invidious distinctions between the labouring and intellectual classes, and the relatively poor and the rich—exhibiting industry, and separate property, and virtue, as offences against society, and poverty and vice as the result only of religion, and laws, and persecution—till the physical power, misdirected and infuriated, shall turn that impatient energy against the institutions of

liberty which in Europe was turned against the feudal system, and thrones, and despotism.

Let not the result of these means and of false security be forgotten, in overturning one of the strongest governments in Europe, with fewer means and greater hindrances than attend their experiment here.

When Voltaire boasted that he was tired of hearing it said that twelve men overturned idolatry and established the Christian religion, and that he would prove that one man was sufficient to expel it from the world, he knew that his infidel clubs were organised, and concocting the poison which books, and tracts, and plays, and every species of publication were circulating through every artery and vein of a great empire. He saw the leaven fermenting, the fever rising, and the unquiet earth heaving. But while the magazines of woe were filling, the nation slept. While the storm was coming on, those who raised it were despised. "What can they do?" said the king, in the majesty of his power. "What can they do?" said the nobility which guarded the throne. "Chimerical, contemptible, what can they do," said the bishops, "against us, who hold the conscience of the nation by the power of habit and the terrors of eternity?" To them it was no more alarming than the mild cloud of evening. But soon it blackened the heavens, and poured down desolation. The mining, to the ear of false confidence, was as the ticking of a clock beneath the surface, till in a moment it became the voice of mighty thunderings. The same results from the same causes had come to pass in England, had not the sagacious Pitt, warned by the fate of his neighbours, consented to take counsel of his fears, and prepare a resisting power; and to his foresight and firmness the civilised world owes its exemption from the overwhelming scourge of atheistic revolution.

There is no trait in the character of man more surprising than his infatuated insensibility to the danger of moral causes.

With the natural world we can make him acquainted, and lead him to foresee the evil, and hide himself; while, upon the moral world he opens his vacant eye, from generation to generation, uninstructed and unwarned. Its laws are as obvious, its causes of evil as deadly and as uniform, in individuals, families, cities, and nations; and still, while the host of evil is mustering, and augmenting, and moving on to their work of ruin, he cries "Peace!" and ridicules those who talk of danger. All nations have been let down from the high tone of early vigour and correct principle, by the outcry against bigotry, and severity, and needless scrupulosity; and by good-natured, simpering, liberal, careless, fool-hardy security in going down stream. It was thus the Epicurean philosophy unharnessed the loins, and quenched the courage, and divided the counsels of patriotic Greece. The same infection extended to Rome, and touched with death the iron sinews and proud heart of that vast empire. Among the Jews, it was saying to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, prophesy smooth things, prophesy deceits—which prepared the way for that unparalleled moral corruption which ended in the destruction of their city and the dispersion of their nation.

The same process, as the natural result of age, and wealth, and voluptuousness, has begun among ourselves.

The energetic virtue of our Puritan ancestry, while we refuse not the blessings it has sent down to us, and which, with a less elastic tone, had never reached us, we are beginning to make the subject of apology and the butt of ridicule. From generation to generation, the threadbare story is going down, that they were too strict; while

every son who, in religion and moral rectitude, resembles his Puritan sire, is made the subject of patriotic suspicion that he is plotting against the liberties of his country.

Now, what have these banded Goths and Vandals to do, but to sing our own songs over their cups, and repeat our own stale jests, and join us in unharnessing the nation from virtuous restraint, by loading with ridicule, suspicion, and obloquy those who know that righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is the reproach of any people? If a foreign army of half a million should invade us the danger would be small; for the effort would correspond with the exigency. But when an order of men are systematically mustering and marshalling, and applying those moral causes which, in all ages, have been more potent in the dissolution of nations than fleets and armies, how is it that those who fear their power are deemed enthusiasts, and charged with the designs they would avert, while smiling, thoughtless, reckless, good-natured men, who cry "Peace!" are regarded as the overflowings of charity and wisdom? But it is a charity which in all ages has dug the grave of liberty, and a wisdom which has buried deep the best interests of man.

If we look at the power of small organised bodies, acting systematically and perseveringly upon improvident and unorganised masses, we may learn not to despise this atheistic fraternity.

The alertness and perseverance which characterise minorities in evil is as proverbial as the phlegmatic indolence and security of majorities on the side of virtue and order; commonly the one gains and the other loses, till the majority changes sides. In all republics, also, the gravitating tendencies of evil, unaided, are powerful. All demagogues flatter the vices of the community, and all who practise licentiousness, and live by its patronage, are

open-mouthed for liberty, and infuriated against bigots. What, then, have these men to do but to row downward with the tide?

In every political movement, also, the unprincipled have the advantage over the principled and sober in their unlimited variety of means. These considerations, without organised treason, tolerated by our abounding charity, made the fathers of the Revolution tremble before the constitution was formed; whose administration, though auspicious, has not allayed the apprehensions of our wisest and best men. Is it not an infatuated security, then, which refuses to fear, and cries "Peace!" when an organised association of men, wise to do evil, and aided by the immemorial downward tendencies of human nature, are directing their most powerful assaults on our most vulnerable and unprotected points?

Consider, also, with how much greater ease society may be undermined and destroyed than organised and built up.

Slowly and reluctantly does human nature rise from ignorance, and sloth, and animalism; and many hands and constant effort are required to raise and hold up the sluggish mass, while a single hand may suffice to cut the cord, and let it thunder back upon destruction. A well-tuned orchestra and harmonious choir demand science and skill, while a fool can put the instruments out of tune, and send out notes of discord. To raise a garden to its highest state of culture, taste, and beauty requires the experience of generations; but a herd of swine may root it all up in a day.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, in this comparison of forces, that for the destruction of our institutions the bad passions only of our nature are needed in a field where the seed is thick-sown spontaneously, and the vegetation is rapid and rank, and the harvest abundant, without

culture. No Bibles are needed, nor sanctuaries, nor laws, nor courts, nor Sabbaths, nor ministers of evil, to prevent the extinction and secure the continuance of selfishness, and pride, and envy, and covetousness, and ambition, and fraud, and sloth, and inebriation, and revenge; while all possible influence of revelation, and law, and schools, and families, and religious institutions, can scarcely keep down the intrusive weeds, and give space and nutrition to the plants of virtue. What a compact, then, is that in which the enemies of our republican institutions have only to aid the vices which flourish spontaneously, and strangle the sickly exotics which our utmost care can scarcely keep alive.

LECTURE IV.

PERILS OF ATHEISM TO OUR NATION.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

THE persons described in this passage denied the providence of God, as the administration of a moral government by rewards and punishments, and asserted the indiscriminating empire of the laws of nature. From the uniformity of his providential government they inferred that no intelligent moral government existed. They were scoffers at God and religion, walking after their own lusts. They are a particular development of wickedness in the last time —the gospel dispensation. Their appearance commenced early, and in modern days has come out in ample desolation.

We have given some account of this class of men in modern Europe, and have entered upon the consideration of their efforts in this country.

It is proposed in this lecture to illustrate, in continuation, the perils of the entire system of scepticism, organised and unorganised, which goes to suspend the action of the government of God, and the influence of Christianity upon our nation; and—

1. The extent of our country renders the efficient supervision of our laws impossible, without a vigorous all-pervading tone of intelligence and moral principle. Our interests are, in fact, one; but our vision is limited, and

our information imperfect, and our selfishness, and pride, and passion, are great, and impatient of self-denial and contradiction; and misinformation, and jealousy, and local prejudice, are of spontaneous growth, and, with the sinister culture of reckless ambition, of rampant vegetation.

When, therefore, we consider the vigour of our national intellect, the freedom of our habits, the self-will and self-sufficiency of our republican character, our boundless enterprise, our corrupting abundance, and voluptuous dissipation, and fractious impatience of rebuke or control—is this the nation, so fearfully and wonderfully made, and so eminently fitted for self-destruction, to say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?" and to Christ, "Let us alone, thou Jesus of Nazareth, for what have we to do with thee?"

Our danger will be seen to be greatly augmented if we consider, moreover, that, beside the collisions of individuals with law and order, some of our most perilous movements are the conflicts of independent states, of mighty nations, condensed for particular purposes into one nation, by the individual suffrage of the entire people; and that often one half the nation is roused in furious political strife to counteract the desires of the other half.

Now, what motives of human origin and application can extend their all-pervading and efficient control over such a mass of mind, so diversified by circumstances, and so delicately, and complexly, and slenderly allied, and so infuriated often by passion, pride, and discontent?

Who but God can speak efficaciously to the waves of such an unquiet sea? What but the omnipotent attractions of his glory, and the sanctions of his eternal government, and the tranquillising influence of his Gospel upon renovated mind, can hold such discordant and powerful materials in prosperous social alliance? These atheists

might as well form a project to annihilate the sun, and hold the material universe together by mere cobwebs instead of his attractions, as to withdraw from masses of depraved mind the moral influence of God's government and the institutions of Christianity.

It was with the utmost difficulty that our union was formed. Nothing but an urgent necessity, and wisdom, and prudence, and patience, and condescension, and confidence in God and his protection and blessing, saved us. When our numbers were small, our extent limited, our capital and credit and enterprise in embryo—and at an age of relative purity of morals, and before the agitations of party spirit assumed their fiery aspect and terrific power—the patriots whom nature and the Revolution had made great, and invested with unlimited influence, found it extremely difficult to achieve the compromise that made us one. And when it was done, it was with trembling that the patriot navigators, with Washington at the helm, launched forth upon the untried deep; and though, as yet, we have not foundered, not one of the patriot band has died in full and certain hope. Nor is the danger past. Dark clouds environ our horizon now, and rocks and quicksands are about our way. Our ablest captains, who in ordinary times conceal their fears, open their eyes and tell us that there are breakers, and a stiff wind, and a lee shore, and that they cannot be answerable for the safety of the ship. That she will weather the storm they hope, but fear that in evil hour she may strike or founder. The concussions of party spirit now are not the healthful conflicts of jealous liberty, but the paroxysms of envy, and desperate ambition, and deadly hate; not the breath of zephyrs and gentle undulations of the lake, to prevent stagnation, but the perilous commotion of powerful elements. What, then, in such a crisis, might not be anti-

cipated, should a band of these political experimenters get on board and gain the helm on purpose to wreck the ship, to re-construct from its fragments another of a better model, and to be navigated under better auspices; to throw overboard compass, quadrant, and chart, and put out the sun to steer by conjecture and the stars? What if they are chimerical and honest? How many misguided men aboard does it require to wreck a ship in a storm?

The unexampled power and prosperity of our nation does but amplify the causes of our ruin, and hasten and render more inevitable its accomplishment, without the corresponding moral influence of the government of God.

Steam has, indeed, annihilated time and distance, and canals and railroads have exalted the valleys, and brought down the mountains; and mechanism, by its abreviations of labour, is relaxing the curse on beast and man, and multiplying a hundred-fold the products of human labour.

But if other republics, on their little territories, and in their dilatory course, accumulated the means of effeminacy and ruin in a few generations, how swiftly must our sun roll up to its meridian, to set among clouds generated by the decomposition of our rank abundance!

Nor let us confide presumptuously in the sufficiency of a national education. For though ignorance may destroy us, knowledge alone cannot save us. Knowledge is, indeed, power; but it is power to kill as well as to make alive, as it is wielded by the madness of the heart or by moral principle. The men who terrified the world by their crimes did not lack mental culture.

It is the heart which governs the intellect, and not the intellect which governs the heart; and it is by the education of the national heart in the first principles of the

government of God, and the guidance of the national will by the hopes and fears of eternity, added to the sanctions of time, that we can undergird the ship, and secure to her a safe passage and quiet moorings.

2. The very greatness of our liberty is its most terrific attribute, in the presence of organised licentiousness and demoralisation.

In a despotic government, force may protect us where public sentiment is too corrupt to secure the execution of the laws. But in a republic it is not so. There, when public sentiment falters, the laws have no power; and then, first anarchy and next despotism ensues. The genius of our government and the competitions of party have introduced universal suffrage. The door is wide open to all who are born and to all who immigrate, and cannot be shut. We must live by universal suffrage or perish. If we can imbue with knowledge and virtue the mass, we shall live; but if irreligion and profligacy predominate, sure as the march of time we fail. Such mobs among us as in England they play with as the lion would play with the kid, would destroy us. Force enough to quell them would, in the hand of an ambitious demagogue, be force enough to enslave us. Ours must be a self-government or a despotism. Such a nation as this must be greatly free, or crushed by the most vigorous despotism that ever extorted groans from suffering humanity. Do any exult in our safety, and bid defiance to disaster, because we are now so free and so powerful? The inconstant ocean might as well exult in her momentary tranquillity, because her waves are above control, when it is the very circumstance of their freedom and indomitable power which gives to the atmosphere such sway over the fluid mass.

Twice in France the physical power has gained the

ascendancy over law; and, by the last victory, the discovery has been made that to patriots cities are fortresses, and pavements munitions. This is one of the most glorious and dreadful discoveries of modern days—glorious in its ultimate results, in the emancipation of the world, but dreadful in those intervening revolutions which popular power may effect in the achievement of liberty, without corresponding intelligence and virtue for its permanent preservation.

The achievement of liberty is not difficult; the question is, where to put it—with whom to intrust it. If it be committed to the multitude, it will perish by anarchy. If national guards are employed for its defence, the bayonets which protect it are at any moment able to destroy it for military despotism. If to a republican king it be intrusted, it will have to be regulated by a state policy, and fed on bread and water, until the action of the heart, and the movement of the tongue, and the power of the arm, as under the deadly incubus, shall cease. THERE IS NOT IN THIS WIDE WORLD A SAFE DEPOSIT FOR LIBERTY BUT THE HEARTS OF PATRIOTS SO ENLIGHTENED AS TO BE ABLE TO JUDGE OF CORRECT LEGISLATION, AND SO PATIENT AND DISINTERESTED AS TO PRACTISE SELF-DENIAL AND SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

But can such a state of society be founded and maintained without the Bible and the institutions of Christianity? Did a condition of unperverted liberty, uninspired by Christianity, ever bless the world through any considerable period of duration? The power of a favouring clime, and the force of genius, did thrust up from the dead level of monotonous despotism the republics of Greece to a temporary liberty; but it was a patent model only, compared with such a liberty as ours; and it was partial, and

capricious, and of short duration, and rendered illustrious rather by the darkness which preceded and followed than the benign influence of its own beams.

Certainly, it is Christianity which in this country rocked the cradle of our liberties, defended our youth, and brought us up to manhood. And it has been proved that, under her auspices, three millions and twelve millions of people may be protected and governed; but that twenty, fifty, or a hundred millions can, without a vast augmentation of moral power over mind, has not been proved; while all past analogies and all present circumstances of our nation announce that Christianity is our only hope, and that without it our destruction does not slumber.

During all past ages the vast majority of the human family, unblest by revelation, have been idolators and slaves, and, at the present time, all nations upon whom the Sun of Righteousness has not risen are in deep darkness, and are crushed by a grievous despotism. Daylight is not more uniformly found in the track of the sun than civil liberty is found in the track of Christianity, and despotism in its absence.

The problem, then, to be settled by this young but mighty nation is this: Can a sufficient intellectual illumination be combined with a sufficient power of moral purity, to create and perpetuate a predominate and efficacious public sentiment in favour of a correct morality, and efficient law for the protection of virtue and the punishment of crime? If this can be achieved, the nation will be the safe depository of liberty for ever. The heart of this mighty people will be its abiding sanctuary, and the arm of this nation uncorrupt will, under God, be its everlasting protection; and we shall be the greatest, happiest nation that ever lived. Violence shall not be heard in our land, nor wasting and destruction within our

borders. Our walls will be salvation, and our gates will be praise. Our sun will not go down, nor our moon wane. The Lord will be our unsetting sun, and our God will be our glory.

We shall not appreciate the danger of an organised effort against our civil and religious institutions, without considering the various bad affinities of our depraved nature, upon which designing men may easily act, and bring them into unconscious subserviency to their purpose.

It cannot be denied that human nature lusteth to envy. No passions in man are more powerful than selfishness, and pride, and inordinate desire, and discontent. These were the origin of the contest between the patricians and plebeians in Rome, which continually agitated and at length destroyed the republic. There is a distinction inseparable from the diverse capacities, characters, habits, and employments of men in which the different departments of labour are indispensable to the most elevated possible condition of society. It exists in every republic, and, no doubt, it is a constitution of things inseparable from the intelligent, perfect society of the universe. But it is a constitution of providence against which rebellion has rolled its most furious tide; and, especially, as the inequality of conditions is aggravated by crime among uninformed masses, goaded by suffering, and reckless of principle, it constitutes a most malignant and terrific physical power, looking up with green-eyed envy upon all the happy fruits of virtue, and knowledge, and industry, in the orders of society above.

None who have not moved through this moral atmosphere, and watched the eye, and noted the significant tones of complaint, and movements of subdued but bitter feeling, can conceive what a magazine lies under the foundations of all which is valuable to man.

This jealousy of the higher orders of society is especially powerful against the rich; it is almost like the ceaseless burning of heated iron. There is pervading the entire class of relative poverty a strong feeling of dissatisfaction, as if they were injured, and as if the rich were the aggressors, and were revelling on the spoils which had been wrested from them.

The various forms of dishonesty, and peculation, and fraud, and violence, are but so many symptomatic indications of the impatient violence which, but for the strong arm of the law, would break out in one levelling prostration of all which art, and industry, and science have reared.

With the constant admonition that this state of feeling is wrong, that inequality of condition is inseparable from the best possible constitution of society, that its miseries are adventitious, originating from the perversion of Heaven's wisdom and goodness—even without intellectual perversion, with the understanding and conscience armed against such feelings, with the omniscient eye of God on the heart, and his voice reiterating—"Be still, and know that I am God"—with his sword drawn, and his lightnings at hand, and his thunderings uttering their voices, and all the retributions of time and eternity impending—it is as much as can be done to prevent explosion and revolution, and more than is done to protect entirely life, and liberty, and property.

The constancy of peculation in trade, the ingenuity of swindlers and pickpockets, the dexterity of theft, the violence of robbery, and the increasing recklessness of murder, show what, as the government of God falls back, is rising up and rushing in upon us—show that the mountain is unquiet, and that these doctrines of atheistic levelling liberty are like so many sparks falling upon a

train already prepared for an explosion, and waiting only for the moment of ignition.

Who that has to deal with property and those who covet does not know the strong fever which burns beneath the restraints of law? How much would any man, well versed in the ways of men, give for his outstanding debts of which he could produce no evidence, or which the laws, sustained by executive power, could not collect? The relations of civilised society and separate property could not exist an hour after public sentiment and the physical power had ceased to sustain the laws.

Let this pestilent philosophy, then, augment the moral obliquity of the lower classes of society by adding the sanction of principle to their perverted, impatient, alienated feeling. Let private property and inequality of condition be stigmatised as an artificial condition, the work of priests and lawyers, of Church and State—a vile civil and ecclesiastical aristocracy. Let the laws be traduced as systems of organised injustice and vile persecution, and the soothing accents of sympathy and hope be breathed upon the ear of suffering humanity by these dear lovers of the people. Let them inculcate on every heart the people's wrongs and their own magnanimous sympathy. Let their voice be heard without at the corners of the streets, at the chief places of concourse, at the opening of the gates, and in all the places of strong drink and inebriation, and sinks of pollution and infamy and woe—ascribing their suffering to priestcraft, and property, and marriage, and virtue, and law. Let them flatter the multitude for virtues which they do not possess, and eulogise as virtues their rank crimes, putting light for darkness and darkness for light. Let them praise one another, and denounce all whose concord with them does not promise aid to their project. Let them bargain their

suffrage to ambitious demagogues, who care not by what ladder they rise, or what is demolished provided they ascend—upon condition that one good turn shall be repaid by another—until, by collusion and the concentration of evil forces, they gain the balance in some closely-contested election, with a sufficient mass of corrupt propensity, and evil daring, and infatuated madness, to seize the moment to let out their experiment. Then, indeed, it will be but for a moment. But that moment will be the downfall of liberty, and the overturnings of revolution, and the infuriated pouring out of blood. It will be but a moment, and the indignation will have passed over; but, like the inundation, it will find a paradise and leave behind it an utter desolation.

If you think that such a crisis cannot come on our country, you have not studied the constitution of society, the character of man, the past history of moral causes, or the existing signs of the times. You have not read the glowing pages of specious argument, of powerful eloquence, of spirit-stirring indignation, pouring adventitious action upon the fever of the brain and the madness of the heart.

Hear these Catilines harangue their troops in the five hundred thousand grog-shops of the nation, the temples and inspiration of atheistic worship: "Comrades, patriots, friends—the time has come. Long have you suffered, and deeply, and in all sorts of ways. Property has been denied you that others might roll in splendour, and toil imposed that they might inherit ease, and poverty inflicted that they might be blessed with more than heart could wish; and, to add ignominy to fraud, and persecution to insult, your names are cast out as evil. You snatch the crumbs from their table, and they call it stealing; the momentary alleviation of your woes by stimulus, drunkenness; and your intercourse as free-born animals is

branded with outlawry and burning shame; and all this by that intolerant aristocracy of wealth, religion and law! You are miserable, and you are oppressed; but you hold in your own hand the power of redress. Those splendid dwellings and glittering equipages, those cultivated farms and cattle on a thousand hills, those barns bursting out with all manner of plenty, those voluptuous cities and stores crowded with merchandise, and boats and ships transporting wealth, and those banks and vaults of gold—are yours. You are the people: numbers are with you—votes are with you. Rise, freemen, rise! to the polls—to the polls, and all is yours!"

It is true this levelling system would destroy the industry of the world. It would augment the number and aggravate the poverty of the poor, as it would expel the arts, banish commerce, stop the plough, and shut up the workshop, and send back the ruined race to skins, and bows and arrows. But what is all this to a short-sighted, infuriated population, who know only that they are miserable, and feel that all above them is invidious distinction and crime; and that to rise it is only necessary to grasp the pillars of society and pull it down? Is there no treason in breathing such doctrines upon the ear of discontented millions? It is throwing firebrands into a magazine.

The number to whom these men and their doctrines have access are not duly considered by those who think that there is no danger. To the uninformed population of our cities, and mechanical and manufacturing establishments, as well as to our sparse frontier settlements, they pay a sedulous attention. To all the vicious, incensed by the outlawry of public sentiment, they send the tokens of their sympathy, the manuals of their instruction, and the trumpet-call to action, with unfaltering confidence of their aid. Upon all the wretched young men whom pleasure has

seduced from the right way, stung to madness and desperation by loss of character and blighted hopes—such as Catiline drew after him to overthrow the liberties of Rome—they may calculate without danger of deception. While the covetous, who live by the vices of the community, and fear that we are going too fast, without intending the extremities which come, may aid to bring them on beyond retrieve. Nominal believers, from great aversion to the accountabilities of an endless government and punishment, may, from repulsion on the one hand, and sympathetic attractions on the other, be made more than neutral, while the forces are collecting, and the conflict is coming on. And all who regard the Bible as a dangerous book for popular use might aid the common effort of restricting its circulation, and putting down rival denominations, intending only their own benefit, but unable, as the crisis rolled on, to stop the overpowering evil.

The direct and indirect influence, then, of this poisonous leaven, industriously propagated, and favoured by human nature and the multiplied coincidences of character, interest, and circumstance, cannot be small, or be safely despised.

But if to this onward movement of concentrated power you add the systematic effort which is making to break down the moral resistances of the community, and to open an unobstructed admission to the flood, our solicitude may well increase.

The natural course of business and pleasure, in its bearings upon the Sabbath, is sufficiently appalling. This day is, no doubt, the great organ of the divine administration. It is of little consequence whether men disbelieve the existence of God, or forget his character, and laws, and authority. But, separate from the Sabbath and social worship, no efficacious means exist for the religious instruction of mankind; and the cessation of the Sabbath

is the abolition of the government of God as really as could be effected by the disbelief of his being. But this dreadful work of obliteration, unplanned and undesigned, is going on as fast almost as atheism could desire. The stream of commerce on our sea-coast is now swelled by the streams of dissipation which pour out from our cities, as from inexhaustible fountains, and by the streams of business, private and national, which hold on their unchecked and augmenting career; while our inland seas and canals, and our stages, and the steamboats, and the railroads, in all directions, seem to vie with each other in their all-pervading and lengthened career of Sabbath-day violation. Alas! the whole nation seems to be, on the Sabbath, in a state of migration, and never in one stay; the sanctuary empty, and every stage, and boat, and tavern full. Who can arrest and instruct this vagrant migrating mind, and who train up the children of the nation, abandoned to ignorance and irreligion? Could the nation be intellectually educated, were all its instructors and all its pupils driving about on wheels and boats in hours consecrated to study? And can the nation be instructed in the government of God, and its own relative duties and responsibilities, by the way-side, or on the canal, or the lake, running unceasingly the race of business and pleasure? Assuredly, this mighty nation cannot be compelled by law to stop and consecrate the Sabbath to the great and benevolent ends of its institution. But it is equally certain that, if it will not voluntarily pause and do homage to the wisdom and benevolence of God, by a spontaneous rest for purposes of religious education and moral culture, the nation is undone. Europe never will be qualified for liberty until she keeps her Sabbaths in a better manner; and this happy nation will not long possess anything to be envied

above the kingdoms of Europe after the influence of her Sabbaths has passed away.

But, as if human depravity and the natural tendencies of things did not sufficiently hasten our ruin, these conspirators, aided inconsiderately by multitudes who know not their purpose, are exciting a systematic jealousy against the Sabbath and its friends. The observance of it, by our fathers and ourselves, in the only way in which its great designs can be answered, is ridiculed; our solicitude for its preservation stigmatised as sainted hypocrisy; our meek supplications and reasonings against its legalised violation adduced as pregnant evidence of conspiracy against our country's liberty.

Great efforts are made also to inspire with jealousy, and to play off against one another, the great Christian denominations of our land, to render our resistance impotent, and the very name of Christian odious.

While they were few and feeble, they were despised; but their multiplication has inspired alarm, and no hope remains but to divide and conquer. Infidels behold with terror the great denominations assimilating in evangelical feeling and effort; and they know that the consummation of confidence and love among us would be death to their hopes. But apprised, too well apprised, of the infirmities of good men, and how open their ears are to suspicion, how much faster false accusation flies than detection follows, and that lies repeated produce on millions the odium which might justly attach to the reality, they cease not from their whisperings and false accusations. They are aware how envy opens the ear to detraction, and guards it against the evidence of integrity, by listless inattention or a jealous scrutiny. They appreciate fully the credulity of men, and the power of a terrified imagination, which, the more it looks into darkness, and the less it can see,

so much the more believes that it swarms with gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire. They know how tenacious we all are of civil and religious liberty, and that nothing would sooner cover a denomination with infamy than to attempt its own aggrandisement on the ruin of other denominations; and, with these elements in view, they seem to have surveyed their ground, and staked their cause on the prospect of sowing discord among brethren by rumours and false accusation.

Their plan is evidently to play off their artillery first upon one denomination, flattering the rest till the first may be humbled; the next most feared and hated is to take its turn and be battered down, giving to the most tame-spirited and abject the privilege of being eaten up the last.

A furious infidel demagogue, not long since, was pouring out his heated invective against the Presbyterians. A gentleman present said to him, "Why do you single out the Presbyterians? Other denominations preach the same doctrines, and have revivals, and propagate the Bible, tracts, and missions." The answer was, "One at a time. We will dispose of the rest when we have taken care of you."

The allegation of a purpose to unite Church and State by one, or by all denominations, is the most foolish, baseless calumny which was ever uttered. There never was an enterprise more opposed to all the feelings of all the citizens of the United States, nurtured from their infancy in the principles of liberty; and no project could be conceived more absolutely impossible, or which would concentrate such an overwhelming tide of public sentiment against it. There is, however, one union of Church and State which is possible, and to which the eyes of the community may well be directed. It is the offered alliance

of political men in power, with one or another rival denomination, sought for purposes of ambition, or by a tottering administration, to sustain its brief authority, or to perpetuate its power.

It is in this way only that the Church ever was united with the State. The Church never sought the alliance, never conspired, and never achieved any such union of the State. The State has always sought the alliance of the Church; and in republics the danger of this kind of tampering and corruption is not less than in monarchies. It is true that public sentiment would not long endure it, and the favoured denomination would be corrupted and ruined by the foul embrace, as the Church in this alliance always has been. Yet the thought is full of terror that the time may ever come when unprincipled men, to paralyse the influence of Christianity, and perpetuate their own bad eminence, shall be able to marshal with jealousy and hate the great denominations of our land one against another; for so mighty are they, and so furious are ecclesiastical politics, that the conflict would be like the battle of angels, opening infernal artillery on the one side, and heaping mountains on their foes on the other. But mark my words: There will never be a union of Church and State in this nation, unless it be one which is sought by infidels in power to perpetuate their own ascendency; and it will commence in persecution and end in civil war.

There is one device more, put into operation by the atheistic fraternity, which, in ingenuity on their part, and credulity on the part of others, surpasses all which has been witnessed in modern days.

It is the device of making the performance of our Christian duties, and the exercise of our religious liberty, evidence of conspiracy against liberty, and the most beneficent and indispensable efforts to perpetuate our

republican institutions evidence of treason. It is reduced to a certainty that civil government cannot administer the moral influence which is needed to diffuse and perpetuate moral principle and virtue through the nation; and that a vast effort of spontaneous benevolence must be made to rescue our nation from barbarian ignorance and fiendish depravity. This auspicious work the several Christian denominations are attempting, with praiseworthy diligence, by efforts to educate a competent ministry, to multiply the Bible, to distribute tracts, to send out and sustain missionaries, and build churches, and bring our wandering millions under evangelical instruction.

And what do we hear but the outcry of a conspiracy to unite Church and State? And these are the items of the evidence against us: We have a Bible Society, sustained by all denominations, and have attempted to supply every family in the nation with Bibles; and this is one evidence of treason. We have a Sabbath-school Union, in which a million of children are taught to read and understand the Bible; and Sabbath-school libraries are springing up over the land: and this is another evidence of treason. We have an American Tract Society, to send out to every door, over city and land, fragments of knowledge, which, by larger books and libraries, would never be sent—little portions of the bread of life, till the main supply can come up; and what do we hear but "Conspiracy! conspiracy!" And our tracts are held up, and shaken in our faces, as evidence to strike us dumb. Yes, we have the audacity, in daylight, to print and give away tracts! Time would fail me to mention all the logical evidences of our guilt of this sort, with the publication and repetition of which the brazen throat of the lying trump of Fame has been worn smooth and polished; or to describe the apparitions and frights which have

danced in disturbed imaginations over the land, like the gambols of witches in the days of yore.

Truly, it would be very convenient to an invading army, coming to take away our liberty, to fill the country with panic fear of their own soldiers, and to need no other evidence to confirm distrust but to refer to their rifles, and bayonets, and excellent discipline, and ample munitions; and yet such, and only such, are the proofs by which atheists would propagate the alarm of Church and State union. But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, whatever theirs may be, but spiritual, moral—the weapons of truth and reason, and fervent prayer, and universal action. We mean, by the moral influence of Christianity, to save both atheists and ourselves from ruin; and in what better or other way can we do it than to be instant in season and out of season to spread the Bible, and circulate tracts, and multiply ministers and missionaries to preach the Gospel? And yet it is this exercise of our rights, and performance of our republican and Christian duties, doing just such things to promote Christianity and civil liberty as our accusers are doing to secure its destruction, which they take up and propagate as evidence of treasonable designs.

But, by such evidence, what may not be proved? I can prove most conclusively that the farmers and manufacturers, merchants and mechanics, of this city have formed a terrible conspiracy to burn us all up. Is it not notorious that the farmers are collecting hay all summer, a very combustible material, which, all the fall and winter, they are bringing in and stowing away in certain places in the city? What can this be for, if it is not to set the city on fire? Then, the manufacturers are pouring in and crowding our stores with cotton-goods, a most combustible material, reserved, no doubt, against the day of conflagra-

tion. What else can they be intended for? And then we are credibly informed by men who have been eye-witnesses of the fact, that there are hundreds of places in this city, where, day and night, men are employed in making shavings, which, added to the hay and cotton, would make a most horrible conflagration; and what else can they possibly make them for? And as if this were not enough to burn us up, our steamboats are continually bringing in tar, and pitch, and turpentine, whose flames water cannot quench. And then there are a number of banks, with great, deep, dark vaults, filled with money—half as much as the Bible Society has stowed away to buy up for slaves the people of the United States. What else can the banks want money for, but to buy these materials to burn up the city? And we are credibly informed that nearly every great city in the land is in the same perilous condition. Don't you think we had better put out the lights, and ring the bells? Just as much cause for it as to ring the tocsin of alarm about Church and State conspiracy to take away our liberties.

The bearing of these false accusations on the population of our great cities is especially terrific; for, to the multitude who believe them, they are, in their exasperating influence, the same as if the pious part of the nation were attempting to enslave them, and are calculated to rouse up in self-defence those infuriated movements which shall bid defiance to law, and with the pavements of the streets batter down our institutions.

In monarchical governments, the political influence of cities is a match for the throne. Twice has France been revolutionised, and Europe shaken, by the good city of Paris; and London, had not the Reform Bill passed, had probably revolutionised England. In our own country,

our cities wield no small portion of the political power of the nation : they are the depositories of the national capital, the channels of intercourse, the concentration of intellect, and enterprise, and physical power, which, if not bound to good behaviour by the fear of God, and an unperverted public sentiment, no police can govern, no troops control. There are also magazines of woe, reserved for the day of vengeance, made up of ignorance, improvidence, and crime, and infuriated envy and wretchedness, at the disposal of irreligious and ambitious men.

It is a problem yet to be solved whether, under a republican government, and within the reach of a perverted and profligate suffrage, the police of our cities can be permanently invested with power sufficient to execute the laws for the protection of life, and liberty, and property. By an all-pervading intellectual and moral culture it can be done ; but without an efficient, constant, successful effort on this point, the floods of desolation will burst out and roll over us. The evangelisation or demoralisation of our cities may be the pivot on which our own and the world's destiny will turn.

With respect to the remedy for Political Atheism, a few things, before we close, may properly be said.

It is perfectly evident that we must not rely chiefly on legal protection and municipal regulations. This would be to perpetuate the mistake, and to reap the disappointment of all past ages. The experiment of governing mind by force has been thoroughly made, and found abortive. The good providence of God is emancipating mind, with reference to its ultimate universal government by intelligence and moral influence, and public sentiment, acting under the benign guidance of Heaven and the sanctions of eternity.

Laws need not, cannot be dispensed with ; but exclu-

sive reliance on them would inevitably be fatal. Their benign efficacy depends on a state of preparation preceding their action, upon moral culture and discipline, upon correct views, habits, and feelings, and an unperverted powerful public sentiment, without which Xerxes might as well chastise and chain the Hellespont as laws attempt to control an undisciplined, turbulent community.

Particularly must all penal laws against atheism, and infidelity, and heresy, be for ever impotent; for free inquiry is the birth-right and the duty of man, and the only condition of all-pervading truth and intelligent self-government. In this age of universal action men will think; and the more obstructions you multiply, the more will the obstructed tide rise, and burst out in wide-spread desolation. Penalties and force will not avail to repress error; and if they would, their adaptation is equal to repress the truth; and the perverted has, in all ages, been more frequent than the unperverted application. Laws and penalties have hindered more truth and protected more error than all causes beside. They have been the citadels of error, and batteries against the truth. If, as incident to free inquiry, there should be the busy licentiousness of the press in the propagation of error, it must be so; it is, in this imperfect state, inseparable from civil and religious liberty. Nothing on earth is perfect; but the unrestrained collision of mind with mind is a lesser evil than coercive attempts at regulation, and in its results the nearest approximation to a perfect condition of society of which human nature admits. It taxes the intellectual energies of the friends of Christianity and liberty, and brings out an energy of mind, and a blaze of truth, and an intensity of benevolent activity, which will, in its movements, produce a greater diffusion of correct opinion, and exalt society to a higher eminence than it otherwise would

have attained, without the excitement and efforts created by resistance.

All these efforts, then, at perverting the mind and corrupting the heart of the nation must be met by argument.

Truth is based on evidence, reason, and utility, while error has nothing to stand upon, and no weapons but sophistry for its defence; and if, with such vantage-ground, the friends of truth cannot or will not maintain their cause, they ought to perish in its ruins.

As Atheism is at present the predominant type of the sceptical mania, those who are set for the defence of the truth, and all intelligent men, should be well versed in the whole argument for the being of a God, and in all the wily and popular sophistry by which it is assailed. The argument as conducted by Paley, in his "Natural Theology," is popular; and for all who will read it, and are willing to be convinced, may suffice. But, while the mania rages, many will breath the infected atmosphere who have no access to this particular antidote. The remedy needs, of course, a minuter form, and a wider dispersion, and demands at present the more frequent agency of the pulpit, and the constant dropping of paragraphs in periodicals and newspapers, and the omnipresent instruction of facts.

In conversation also, at home and by the way-side, it behoves the friends of truth—not only ecclesiastics, but laymen—to be able to give a reason for their Christian hope, and by sound argument to convince the gainsayers; for the disease is as anti-philosophical as it is anti-Christian, and he is not worthy the name or the station of a patriot watchman who does not descry the approaching evil, and set himself seriously to guard the community against its invasion.

This nation is destined to become universally a reading nation, and may be, by timely care, guarded efficaciously

against the follies and mischiefs of political atheists: but care and effort are indispensable; for, since their discomfiture by Dwight and a host of others, a generation has risen, to whom the cavils are now new, and the answers of other days unknown. The time was when Dwight ceased to preach upon the evidences of Christianity, so entirely had the mania of infidelity passed away; but, as if to take vengeance for past defeat, it has rushed by surprise upon the existing unarmed generation, and the battle must be fought over again, and probably for the last time, before that Wicked One will be destroyed by the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming.

But to meet the exigencies of the new generation, the evidences of Christianity should be made familiar to the entire rising generation, from the pulpit, and in tracts—in popular familiar argument—and the little manuals formed for the libraries of every Sabbath and common school.

Especially is it important that the Bible should be studied and explained in all our colleges and elevated schools; its chronology, history, geography, mental philosophy and natural history; its doctrines, arguments, eloquence, poetry, inspiration, and the elementary principles of its interpretation.

The Bible, read and understood, is in no danger of losing its ascendancy, as an inspired book, over the understanding, and the conscience, and the heart. It is ignorance of the Bible which is the parent of infidelity, and gives to its specious arguments power over the common mind. A system of well-studied interpretation would sweep away every objection, and bring every knee to bow and every tongue to confess.

But argument alone is not all which the present exigency demands. The doctrines of political atheists are the consummation of folly, and ample justice cannot be done in

defending the community against them, without the touch of irony, which shall take off their fair disguises and exhibit their unsightly proportions and combinations. Truth can never be made ridiculous but by caricature. Error can never be presented as it is without the ludicrous; the more accurately and vividly you portray its elementary principles, the more you develope its absurdities, and cover it with ridicule. There is no malignity in this. The entire beauty and power of truth cannot be felt but in the presence of the odious and ridiculous contrast; and public justice demands it. If the exhibition produce laughter, the fault is in the thing exhibited, not in the exhibitor. There are principles so ridiculous that grave debate exalts them to a consequence of bad eminence, to which otherwise they could not attain; and in such case inspiration has directed us to answer a fool according to his folly. There is, on this subject, no small amount of incorrect opinion and fastidious feeling among good men, from not considering duly the place and use, and lawfulness and necessity, of ridicule. All diseases do not demand the caustic; but there are sores that will yield to nothing else. Ridicule is the most potent weapon with which Christianity is assailed; and there is no doubt that, in its proper place, it is one of the most powerful weapons of discomfiture to the assailant, and defence to the cause.

There is one other remedy more potent than all—it is the united and emphatic decision of public sentiment against these irreligious and licentious opinions. There is nothing which these marauders so much fear, of which they so loudly complain, as their outlawry by public sentiment: they call it bigotry, malignancy, intolerance, and persecution.

The liberty they claim is the liberty of thinking as they please, without the responsibility of any re-acting

opinion ; of opening upon Christian societies and institutions their batteries of invective, ridicule, and denunciation, without the perils of a return fire ; the right of universal denunciation, with the modest demand of universal approbation and eulogy. But we are not so fond of this moral martyrdom ; and while we would not apply penal sanctions, God forbid that we should withhold the steady, withering frown of outraged and indignant virtue : there is no other effectual resistance. Whenever the public discrimination between truth and error, and common-sense and folly, and moral purity and pollution, shall falter, so that profligate men shall encounter no reproving eye, and irreligious men no re-action of the public mind, then are the flood-gates open, and the stream of pollution is rolling deep and rapid under the foundations of our institutions, and it will be but a moment before, like Babylon, they will sink never to rise.

I cannot close this lecture without calling around me, in imagination, and with feelings of great respect and affection, the labouring-classes of this nation, whose religious and political faith these men would subvert.

My beloved countrymen, if there is an eye in the universe that pities you, or a heart that feels for you, or a hand stretched out for *your* protection especially, it is the eye, and the heart, and the hand of Heaven—it is *your* cause that the Christian revelation espouses. No other religion ever cared for the common people, ever brought them within the reach of instruction, or ever elevated them to intelligence, and competence, and virtue. In all Pagan, Mahometan, and Papal lands they are in deep darkness and in chains, beneath grievous burdens. It is the Bible, and the Sabbath, and the preaching of the Gospel, and the schools, and the virtue, and the enterprise, and the equality, which Christianity creates, which dispel

the darkness, and open the prison door, and knock off the chains, and break off the yoke, and take off the burdens, which have in all nations and ages been the lot of persons in your condition.

Infidels are republicans in theory and in tongue, but not in deed and in truth. They are not your friends; but God *is* your friend. He has predicted and projected, and will accomplish, your elevation. Jesus Christ is your friend. He was born of virtuous and industrious parents in humble life. He performed your labours, felt your cares, bore in his own body your sorrows, and can be and is touched with the feeling of your infirmities. He knows how to emancipate and elevate you, and mitigate the curse which has for ages rested so heavily upon you. But these infidel philosophers are blind, ignorant, untaught, and unteachable masters, who, while they promise you liberty, are themselves the servants of sin; and while they offer to raise you, will thrust you down to deeper poverty, and reckless animalism and wretchedness.

What nation have they ever emancipated, but by a revolution more terrific than despotism? What well-ordered republic have they ever formed and maintained a single year? What community have they enlightened and purified? Where are the schools and colleges for the sons of the poor which they have founded? What single family have they blessed with purer affections, and augmented industry, and domestic peace? What single heart have they ever made better by the extinction of evil passions and the nurture of benevolence? What vicious man have they reclaimed, what poor man have they made rich, what miserable man have they sustained by their philosophy, in life or in death?

Well-meaning they may be, but it is the well-meaning of ignorant and foolish men—ignorant of the Bible,

ignorant of history, ignorant of human nature, and of those moral causes which have always been auspicious or pernicious—not knowing what they say, or whereof they affirm. Reckless are they of their own and of your best good; wanton, rash, and desperate are they in their experiments—moral maniacs, more utterly bereft of common-sense than any other class of men who ever set up for guides, and challenged confidence. The evidence cannot be heightened of the falsehood and folly of their system. Should they propose a system of agriculture which reversed every one of the known principles of natural philosophy, it would not surpass the violence which their system does to the equally well-known and established laws of mind, society, and moral government. That righteousness, such as they despise, exalteth a nation; and sin, such as they eulogise, is the destruction of a people, is as certain as the laws of vision or of gravitation.

It is hard to elevate the mass, and harder to sustain it; and none, but by the help of God and his institutions, have been able to do it. Christianity is the world's last hope for civil liberty; if this will not diversify the results of national prosperity, then are we with rapid strides making for the precipice, and preparing to bid a long farewell to all our liberty. You must reject these evil counsellors. You must appreciate the Bible, or you and yours will soon fall back into that state of hopeless ignorance, and poverty, and vice, from which there is no resurrection. The priestcraft which has darkened and enslaved the world is one which has rejected or sequestered the Bible; not that which gave it to the common people, and preached the Gospel to the poor. It is Christianity which introduces universal liberty, which equalises and elevates; and it is its absence which

puts you down. The conspiracy against your liberties is forming by those who would banish from you the day of rest, and intellectual and moral improvement, and doom you and your families to toil seven days instead of six, without the least increase of remuneration. This it is which will dwarf the intellect of the labouring-classes, and throw them back into the distance beyond the light of hope, and the reach of successful competition. If you wish to be free indeed, you must be virtuous, temperate, well instructed, with the door of honour and profit open to you and to your children. As the sun draws up the whole body of the ocean it passes over, raising the tide in the career of his glorious way, so will the Sun of Righteousness take hold of you and your families, and raise them up, and bring them within the constant attraction of hope and virtue. Those who wish for the preservation of the Sabbath are not bigots; they do not seek a union of Church and State; they seek the unextinguished lustre of that moral sun, for your sake, who with it will rise, and without it will go down to where all the labouring-classes of the world have been, and now are, whom the Bible and the Sabbath have not emancipated and elevated.

It is the agriculturists, merchants, manufacturers, and day-labourers of the nation, who must decide its destiny. It is your hearts that must be the sanctuary of liberty, and your consciences that must stand sentinel to prevent her perversion, and your bodies that must constitute a rampart around those holy and blessed institutions of Heaven which God has given to man in the Bible—whose blessings our fathers, with toil and blood, purchased—which, with augmenting prosperity at every step, have come down, and are now encompassing us like the waves of the sea; blessings which urge themselves upon us, and

from which we cannot flee, and whose blest intrusion we cannot resist but by taking counsel to break the bands of Christ, and cast away his cords from us. We need not petition Congress to spare the Sabbath ; if they do, the people can desecrate the sacred day. The people must decide, each man for himself and his family, whether they will live under the government of God, and enjoy its sunshine and breathe its liberty, and be elevated by its power, and sanctified by its purity, and cheered by its exuberant, unnumbered, and inexhaustible blessings, or go back to the midnight of ignorance and the bondage of corruption.

LECTURE V.

THE ATTRIBUTES AND CHARACTER OF GOD.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

GREAT errors in doctrine result usually from mistaken conceptions of the attributes and character of God. There are two extremes to which the mind is liable—the one is to regard the Divine Being only in his public character, as the lawgiver of the universe; and his power, and wisdom, and goodness, only as they are manifested in his public relations in the government of a sinful world.

In one view, all which is dark, and terrible, and irresistible, is gathered about him—all which is spotless in purity, and vehement in his hatred of sin, and inexorable in its punishment. He is surrounded by fire, and storms, and earthquakes, and pestilence, and war—the symbols of present and coming wrath; his eye is fixed on public justice, and his heart glows with a benevolence too vast to hold sympathetic communion with the guilty and the miserable.

Though there is some truth in these views, in their place and proportion, they are not the whole truth, and therefore misrepresent the character of God almost as fearfully as if they were false. They constitute a dark cloud, behind which all heaven's artillery is put into

action to extinguish hope, and keep a rebel world in a state of terror and reckless desperation.

And they are doubly injurious, because, ever since the Fall, the fear of God has usurped the place of filial confidence, and has been excessive. A dread of him is upon the mind of guilty man, which, in imitation of the first pair, leads him to flee and hide from his presence.

In all false religions, fear has ever been the predominant principle of worship, and rage and cruelty the principles to be appeased; and even where the light of the Gospel has shined, and its voice has proclaimed peace, the quaking and standing afar off has not ceased. God, to the eye of guilt and unbelief, appears too great, too distant, and too much engrossed with his vast concerns of state, and too holy and too just, to inspire with confidence the guilty, and bring them with humble boldness near. It is the object, therefore, of God, in the Gospel, *to re-assure his ruined guilty creatures of his unextinguished kindness* FOR THEM, *and to bring them back, reconciled and forgiven, to his fellowship and favour.*

It is, no doubt, important that man should be well certified of the holiness and justice of God, and that ultimately he will by no means clear the guilty. But to overcome the panic, and bring the full and saving power of the Gospel upon alienated mind, it is not less important that sinners should be made to feel that God loves and pities them than that he abhors sin, and will not fail to punish it. Compassion alone would create presumption, and justice alone desperation. The mingled influence of both is needed to alarm the sinner to flee from wrath, and to allure him with humble boldness to fly to God by Jesus Christ.

But, instead of this justly-balanced exhibition, many rush into the opposite extreme. They divest the Most

Holy entirely of public responsibilities, regarding him only in the capacity of a benevolent individual, consulting alone the direct impulse of kind feeling, without any reference to general consequences. They cancel all the public responsibilities of God to the universe, as its moral governor. With the magic wand of unbelief, they dispel the darkness round about his throne, and put out the fires, and stop the mighty thunderings and the voice of the trumpet, and array with smiles the face of Heaven alike upon the righteous and the wicked; destined, by dint of omnipotence, to those transformations which shall consummate their meetness for heaven, and make them happy.

The fact is too evident to be denied, that both the majestic and terrific, the gentle and the winning, exhibitions of the divine character, are contained in the Bible, and are correct exhibitions of the divine mind, as its attributes and character are developed in the creation and government of the intelligent universe. In the administration of moral government, there is occasion also for these seemingly opposite attributes and exhibitions of character. They are harmonious, and indispensable to a perfect character, and to the administration of a perfect moral government.

It will be the object, therefore, of this lecture to give a concise account of the attributes and character of God, as disclosed in his works, and revealed in his word.

This will be especially important, because correct conceptions of the relations of God to the universe, as its lawgiver—of his providence, as the administration of a moral government—of his word, as a system of remedial legislation for the recovery to holiness of lost subjects—and correct definitions of his attributes, natural and moral, as displayed in this great work, include a large portion

of the elementary principles of theology; while false conceptions of his attributes and character hang sackcloth about the Sun of Righteousness, and break the mainspring of his government. We observe, then:—

1. That God is a spirit.

By spirit, we do not mean that nondescript, unthinking, undesigning energy denominated Nature—that all-pervading soul of the universe, the fountain of effervescence and fermentation, the volcanic centre of emanation, and subsequent attraction and absorption, the flint and steel for the scintillation of mind, to fall back, in due time, into the form of fixed caloric. Such mysticism we abandon to those who can comprehend it, or love to dream amid the repetition of beautiful uncertain sounds, and glittering, undefined images.

By spirit we mean mind, as opposed to matter; exhibiting intelligence, acting by design, as opposed to instinct; and diversified volition, in the view of motives, as opposed to an unthinking, irresistible necessity—mind capable of intense desire, of permanent choice in the selection of its chief good, and of plan and subordinate volition and action for the attainment of its object; capable of copious affections, and social affinities, and high enjoyment, and in subjects of government by law and by the rewards and punishments of an eternal state.

Of the essence of mind or matter we say nothing, because we know nothing; all that we know of either being disclosed by their attributes, as displayed in cause and effect. That they are different existences we conclude because they disclose no attributes in common, and all their phenomena are different and opposite, so that it might as well be insisted that matter is spirit as that mind is matter; there being no foundation for saying either, but all possible evidence to the contrary. The

only evidence of different material substances is their different effects; and if the different phenomena of mind and matter do not evidence different existences, there is no evidence to disprove the perfect homogeneity and identity of all things.

2. God is eternal.

We have seen that something is eternal, or nothing could have begun to be, and that this eternal *something* cannot be matter; for inert matter cannot produce organisation, such as exists in plants, trees, animals, and the human body. It could not produce the motions of the planets in their orbits, and the revolving of the earth upon her axis; much less could matter produce mind, feeling, perception, intellect, design, desire, will, affections, and executive energy; but such minds exist, of recent origin, and limited duration upon earth. Such existences matter could not produce, but only that Mind whose invisible attributes, natural and moral, are "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his *eternal* power and Godhead."

3. God is self-existent.

The meaning is not that God is self-created, which would be a contradiction, or that he is self-sustained, implying that his existence depends on his own voluntary effort to perpetuate his being, but that his existence is underived, and independent of external causes, and as incapable of cessation as of beginning; that his continuance no more depends on choice than his underived, eternal being; and that unending, unchanged existence belongs to the very nature of God, as really as dependence and mutability belong to all which is created. This is the testimony of reason; for why should that which is underived and independent of any outward cause, and has existed from eternity, ever cease to be? It is also the

testimony of the Bible: "I am that I am." "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

4. God is omniscient.

He knows all real and all possible things; otherwise there would be no evidence of the absolute perfection and the immutability of his purposes and their execution. For if all that is possible to infinite wisdom, and goodness, and power, were not open and naked before him, he might form defective plans and make discoveries and changes by experience. But before he commenced creation, "known unto God were all his works." The immensity of the diversified possibility of things lay open before him, from the entire of which wisdom and goodness selected the system which should be. To this system, in all its attributes, parts, dependencies, and movements, and results, his knowledge extends through all its existence of past, present and future.

It does not, however, follow from this, as some have supposed, that to the divine mind there is no such thing as the succession of events, and that to him present, past, and future are *one eternal now*. That there are no successive developments of knowledge to the divine mind is certain. That all truths and facts were present to the mind of God from eternity, and are always present, none can doubt; but then his knowledge is correct knowledge. He sees things as they *are*. Unless, therefore, all events co-exist, and are *actually* one eternal now, they cannot appear to be so to God without supposing his mind to be under a palpable delusion. There is a difference—a real, actual difference—between past, and present, and future—between an event which has come to pass and one which is yet to be; and, no doubt, to the divine mind, while all existence is known constantly and clearly, as if it were

present before him, it is known as actual existence only in the order in which it becomes such. The relations of past, present, and future existence are real, and therefore are as real to the divine mind as to the human mind.

The omniscience of God is taught in the Bible, in language worthy of the theme, and of the Mind who moved the holy men of old to give it utterance. "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! He knoweth all things; he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him."

5. God is omnipresent.

This is to be understood only of his knowledge and constant efficiency throughout all his works. Of the essence of spirit, if there be such a thing distinct from its developed attributes, we know nothing and the Scriptures say nothing. That God fills immensity as matter occupies space is not the form in which his omnipresence is taught in the Bible; but that, as the human mind exerts its wisdom, and benevolence, and powers, on all parts of the material system it inhabits, in like manner the energy of the divine mind extends constantly to the upholding and government of the entire universe.

The ubiquity of the divine inspection, support, and government, extends alike both to the natural and moral universe, to matter and to mind, to physical and to moral government; it being to Jehovah just as practicable to execute his purposes of moral government by moral influences as to control the material movements of the universe by his direct omnipotence. The omnipresence of God is most forcibly and most beautifully taught in the following language of the 139th Psalm:—

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou under-

standest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me—yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

6. God is almighty.

He can do all things which are in their nature possible.

Contradictions are impossibilities. To cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time, is an impossibility. To make a circle square, and a square round; to make happiness misery, and misery happiness; to make selfishness and envy right, and benevolence wrong; to make matter spirit, or spirit matter, or to govern each by the same laws and means—*all* these would be *contradictions*—things impossible to any power. But, *in respect to things possible,* "*all* things are possible" with God. His power is infinite and unlimited. There is in it no deficiency to accomplish any possible thing, and no obstacle to hinder or make it difficult. The entire field of universal possibility is open to his power. He is the Lord God Almighty, the Scriptures affirm, and his works declare it. He can create—can originate being—can command a universe to

arise up around him, where before emptiness and silence reigned. It is to be observed that the power of God is, in its exercise, always associated with infinite wisdom and benevolence, and is limited only by the wise and benevolent constitution which God has given to things, and the laws which he has adopted for their most perfect government. There is nothing in its nature possible which God cannot do; and yet there are innumerable things, in their nature possible to be done, which God will not do, because it would not be possible to bring them in as parts of the wisest and best system; because, without abandoning the wisest and best system, he *could not do them.* He could, so far as power is concerned, pardon sin without an atonement; but he could not make it a wise and benevolent act, in the administration of the best possible system of moral government. He is as able, so far as power is concerned, to utter falsehood as truth; but he is not able, and no power is competent, to make falsehood as wise and benign in moral government as immutable truth.

It is to be remembered that the power of God in the government of the natural and moral world corresponds always with the nature of the subject—the one he governs by his power acting on the attributes which he has given to matter; the other, by his power acting upon mind, through the intervention of motives contained in his law, gospel, and providence, and administered and made effectual by his spirit. In the material universe, he can do all which his perfect plan demands by his power direct on matter; and in the world of intellect, and free agency, and accountability, he can do all by his laws and providence, and their administration by his spirit, which his hand and counsel has determined to be done. He never decreed to govern the sun by the Ten Commandments, nor to govern free accountable mind by direct irresistible omnipotence.

7. God is good.

The preceding are his natural attributes, which appertain to his being, independent of choice, and are desirable or terrible as they are employed in the dissemination of good or evil. Happiness and misery are the two opposites—the good and the evil of the universe; and natural causes are useful or pernicious as they produce the one or the other; and intelligent beings are benevolent or malignant as they prefer the one to the other, and consecrate their powers to its extension and perpetuity.

Benevolence, then, is the love of doing good, of communicating and perpetuating enjoyment.

In the divine being, it is not one of several attributes, but his entire moral nature—the generic principle of his glorious moral excellence. It is not an instinct, but an enlightened preference of good to evil, and of doing good to doing evil. It is not a blind impulse of some irresistible fatality. God is a free agent, and, in the selection of his own chief end, acts as voluntarily as his creatures in the selection of their chief end. He exists by necessity, and all his natural attributes are independent of his choice. But his moral excellence is, in its fountain and in all its streams, perfectly voluntary. There are intelligences who are selfish; they seek their own exclusively. The communication of good is not their supreme desire. They are like the vortex which swallows all which falls within its scope, crying, Give! and never saying, It is enough! They find no pleasure in the communication of good, as their chief end, but rather in its monopoly. But the divine mind is like an ocean of immeasurable circumference, unfathomable depth, and inexhaustible fulness, ever spontaneously overflowing in the communication of enjoyment.

This benevolence of God, though vast, is also minute in

its inspection, and impartial in its administration. All beings are regarded with good will, according to their capacity, and with complacency, according to their character and deeds.

It includes, of course, his own well-being, as comprehending the greatest good, and the well-being of the universe, as involved in the stability of his counsels and the prosperity of his kingdom; and extends to every creature capable of enjoyment, from angel to insect, with an impartiality which none but God himself can regulate.

It is a benevolence which is pure and unmingled. In convalescent human nature, it exists in alliance with great defects of passion, and selfishness, and pride; but in God it is not so. There is no spot on his sun. God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all; and pure as crystal are the waters which flow from the throne of God and the Lamb.

The benevolence of God is also infinite. It is great like his power, and immense like his being.

All created intellect, condensed into one mind, would be but a ray compared with the eternal mind; and all the benevolence which warms the hearts of holy beings, united, would constitute but a drop when compared with the ocean of his love. It is a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, which cannot be comprehended.

It is also a principle of omnipotent, constant, eternal action. It is the nature of mind to act, and the blessedness of benevolent minds to act in doing good; and it is in his untiring, uninterrupted, benevolent activity that he is God over all, blessed for ever.

8. God is just.

The justice of God is his benevolence and wisdom, expressed in the administration of rewards and punish-

ments, for the public good, according to the character and deeds of his subjects.

The existence of intelligent beings and accountability is indispensable to the greatest amount of enjoyment; and law is indispensable to the propitious government of mind; and reward and punishment are indispensable to the moral influence of law. Were God, then, to create a universe of mind, capable of enjoyment, and pressed by desire and its own impatient activity, without guidance and competent motive to render obedience reasonable and sin inexcusable, it would be no evidence of goodness, but rather of cruelty; and to annex sanctions which are never to be realised would be to set forth the form of government without the power.

Justice in God is not, then, as to many it would seem, a dark, frowning attribute—a stern, unfeeling severity—but the benevolent conservatory principle of the universe, by which the Lord God Almighty maintains the empire of righteousness, and extends around him the blessedness of an eternal day. Were the governing intelligence of the universe impotent and indolent, or cruel, or capricious, or partial, his administration might well be dreaded. But while benevolence and mercy are mingled with justice, and not a stroke of the rod falls which incorrigible wickedness and the public good do not render just and indispensable, none but determined rebels have cause to fear.

Is justice in human governments a cold-hearted despotism? Who does not call for it when his character is assailed, when his rights of property are invaded, or his life is threatened, or when public insurrections threaten to put an end to the safeguard of law? And no class of men are more eulogised, as the benefactors of mankind, than those of incorruptible integrity and unflinching courage who hold the balance even on the judgment-seat. No

good man has any pleasure in the punishment of a sinning fellow-being; but he has pleasure in the public purity and happiness which the prostration of law and the prevalence of anarchy would destroy.

What should we think of the chief magistrate of a nation, sworn to see that the commonwealth receives no detriment, smitten with such tender-heartedness for pirates and robbers as would let out desolation to sweep over land and sea because he could not find it in his heart to punish the guilty? There is nothing but justice which stands between any government, human or divine, and contempt and anarchy. And can it be thought desirable and amiable in God that he should lay aside the sword, and turn a face of smiles alike on the evil and the good in this world of moral madness and self-destruction?

Is it considered that the most wretched possible condition of human beings is that in which judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, and truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter? that the most lovely feature of a republic is the mild but efficient administration of equal laws—and the most repelling feature in despotism is its injustice—and the most intolerable scourge of anarchy its injustice—and that the most terrific circumstance in the world of woe is its outlawry from all protection and benefit from the moral government of God, and its abandonment to unrestrained malignity and everlasting anarchy?

9. God is merciful.

Mercy is the exercise of benevolence in the reformation and forgiveness of the guilty, in ways consistent with the influence of law, and the safety of the intelligent universe.

In a state of loyalty, the divine benevolence flows full and unobstructed to every individual. Transgression, while it does not extinguish his good will, renders the

practical expression of it impracticable, and demands the interposition of penal evil for the protection of law and order.

The Atonement, received by faith, places the subject in such relations to Christ, as that public justice does not demand his punishment, or forbid his forgiveness and restoration to favour. It opens wide the channel which sin had obstructed, for his mercy to flow in; and God, who has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth—who never punishes merely because it is deserved, but always only because the public good demands it—now, released from the public necessity of punishment, in the exercise of mercy through the atonement, freely pardons the believer and receives him into favour. Mercy, then, is the personal benevolence of Jehovah, flowing in unison with the public good, in the reformation and forgiveness of lost men. It is a mercy, however, which always sees to it that the commonwealth receives no detriment, and which moves only in the train of public justice satisfied, and the public good protected.

In close alliance with mercy, it may be added that God is slow to anger, and of great patience.

Human passions are ascribed to God, not as *identical* with what exists in the divine mind, but as analogical. The metaphor has always some resemblance to that which it represents. Between anger as ascribed to God and to man there is the coincidence of strong disapprobation, and emphatic action in the infliction of evil; but with this difference, that in man the impulse is malignant, while in God it is benevolent. In man it is personal revenge; in God it is public justice for benevolent purposes.

Long-suffering *implies* that public justice does not always demand the immediate execution of the deserved evil, and that always God is disposed to defer the infliction as long,

and to continue the means of reformation as long, as the public good will permit.

We may not omit to add that God is full of compassion.

Compassion is sympathy for the afflicted and miserable. But such is the immensity of the divine nature, and the extent of his creation, and the magnitude and number of his worlds and works, and the majesty and fulness of his benevolence, as it flows in the channels of his general laws, that single minds are tempted to feel as if the heart which guides the universe, and wakes about the throne the song, and pours through eternity the tide of joy, could not stoop to hear the sigh of secret sorrow, or move with sympathetic compassion and personal friendship for the distressed; and much less that He in whose sight the heavens are not clean will look down with affectionate compassion upon the guilty and ill-deserving. Nor is it till we have considered the adaptation of his capacity to the minutest as well as to the greatest of his works, and the condescension of his benevolence to the most limited as well as to the greatest capacities he has formed, and, added to these, the reiterated declaration of his compassion contained in his Word, that we can bring home, realisingly and efficaciously, the sense of his presence with us, and constant, benignant care, and quick and real sympathy. But it is only as the vastness of his being, the extent of his works, the glory of his laws and moral government, and of their administration, are considered, in alliance with all the nearness and tenderness of parental affection, that the entire character of God comes out upon the soul, and all his claims to our confidence and love are felt, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin is realised, and the riches of his goodness apprehended in providing a Redeemer—and with such a sacrifice of feeling to himself and to his Son as must be implied in giving him up to suffering and to

death that we might be delivered from shame, and live for ever.

It is the concentration of these majestic and touching traits of the divine character—this union of the vast with the minute, of strength with tenderness, of justice with mercy, and self-existent blessedness with the most gentle movements of compassion and sympathy—which melts instantly the heart it touches, and renders the moral power of the Gospel, in the hand of the Spirit, omnipotent. Nor is it to be anticipated that, until the clouds of a false philosophy about the character of God are dispelled, and its full-orbed mildness and radiance and power are let out upon the world, nation after nation will fall down before him, as the Sun of Righteousness rolls his subduing light over the earth, encountering little opposition, and leaving in his train nothing but loyalty and praise.

But to hold up our faith to these blessed visions of the divine character, and to arm our ministry and the exhortations and prayers of the Church with power, we shall do well to remember that the greatness of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God is illustrated in the formation of minds, every one of which, as lost or saved, and subject to the endless and augmenting knowledge of good or evil, is of more importance than the entire material universe.

The condition of a perverted mind is also well calculated to lay hold upon the susceptibilities of benevolence; and of none more than the mind of Him who formed the ruined agent, and comprehends the good rejected and the evil chosen, the amplitude of the remedy, the urgent sincerity of its offer, and the voluntariness of its rejection, while the incorrigible ingrate is moving onward to the crisis of a confirmed and everlasting madness, where insatiable desire, and pinching famine, and wounded pride,

and rankling envy, and fear, and ferocious hate, and terror, and sinking of heart, and lamentation, and despair, will occupy the ever-coming periods of duration!

Miserable innocence, exposed only to temporary evils, would not fail to participate in the compassion of the Deity; but how much more moving are the exhibitions of miserable guilt, exposed to evils which will never end, and obstinately regardless of deliverance.

Nor does the immensity of the divine mind, or the extent of its supervision, disqualify or disincline for minute, constant, and kind attention.

When he projected creation, he understood his resources, and has not set for himself a task too hard. The Almighty fainteth not, neither is weary; and the Watchman of Israel never slumbers, but superintends with equal ease the orbs whose being we learn from a telescope, and those minutest mites of animated being which the microscope brings up to our knowledge from the downward distance. Minute and great are alike in respect to the adaptation of his powers, or the claims of mind on his benevolence.

It is consistent to the purity of his holiness, and his public character as the supreme executive of the universe, that he should feel compassion for the miserable and the guilty. It implies no complacency in sinful character, and no faltering of purpose in respect to the claims of public justice, but renders his administration more lovely, sure, and terrible to the incorrigible, that it is the unchanging award of a benevolence full of compassion, but yet will by no means clear the guilty.

It is compassion mingled with parental government and discipline which gives it loveliness and tone. It is compassion in human governments, mingling with justice, which takes off the appearance of cruelty, and makes

rulers a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well.

Nor need our faith in the compassion of the Deity be shaken by the strong and terrible expressions contained in the Bible of his abhorrence of sin, his anger, wrath, fury, and unalterable determination to punish it. Metaphors express analogies, but not exact identity. There must be points of resemblance to render one thing the symbol of another; and how are conceptions of the movements of the divine mind to be communicated but by the aid of some analogous movement of the human mind, with which we are acquainted? Now, anger includes strong moral disapprobation and a strong purpose of inflicting evil, only with this difference—that in man malignity and revenge is the spring of action, while in God it is benevolence in the form of public justice. It is, then, a suitable, forcible, terrific imagery, to speak of God as angry, wroth, incensed, full of indignation and fury. But it expresses only, by the power of metaphor, the strength of his aversion to sin, the intensity of his purpose to punish it, and the terrible effects of public justice when the work of desolation shall begin. Anger in God is not malignant feeling; not any thirsting for the blood of the slain; not any pleasure in suffering, or an opportunity to inflict it; nothing which will prevent compassion, even while the tide of desolation rolls; nothing which will obscure the bow, and a smiling sky, to him that is humble and of a contrite heart, and believeth in Jesus.

Nor is the exercise of compassion inconsistent with the blessedness of God, if to any it should seem to be so. God understands his own character; and we are not permitted to thrust up the lamp of our philosophy to prove that he has misdescribed his capabilities and emotions.

But the delicate and tender susceptibilities of a mighty mind would appear to be as indispensable to its enjoyment as vast emotions of unmingled pleasure; and quite indispensable to its fellowship with created minds, and especially so to revive the confidence and re-establish the loyalty of the dismayed, alienated, jealous, fearful hearts of a ruined world. How sweet is the voice of mercy to the desperate or despondent mind! how soul-subduing the notes of divine compassion on the ear of guilt! how sweet the tender cords of love drawing the soul into fellowship with Heaven, while, as yet, it half believeth not for joy! But it is enough that, in believing in the sympathetic affections of the divine mind, we do not follow philosophy or fables, but divine testimony. God, who cannot lie, has caused it to be written that he is God over all, blessed for ever; and at the same time that he is full of compassion, not willing that any should perish, but desiring sincerely that all should come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

LECTURE VI.

THE NECESSITY OF A REVELATION FROM GOD TO MAN.

I REMEMBER the time when there was no such thing as infidelity openly advocated in our land. It was imported from France during the revolutionary war. The first public assault that was made upon the Bible was by Thomas Paine, in his "Age of Reason." It went like an electric shock through the land, and, for a time, unsettled the confidence of many. But an era of prayer, and discussion, and revivals of religion, speedily followed, and the tide of infidelity ebbed; until, after about six or eight years, there was no longer any ostentatious display of infidel opinions in high places, and scarcely at all anywhere; and the name of infidel was no longer coveted as indicative of knowledge, or talent, or courage. Since then the epidemic has revived, and extended to large classes of society not usually affected by it—the labouring-classes; and by the circulation of tracts, and continued boasting declamation, the advocates of infidelity have turned their footsteps to the farm and workshop, well knowing that, if they could succeed in depositing their poison there, a copious harvest would ensue.

The danger of the working-men of our nation does not arise from any prejudice against Christianity peculiar to them; but objections are thrust upon them, and cavils are insinuated of the most injurious kind, which they know not how to answer; while sneers are hurled at religion, which, like envenomed arrows, inflict wounds

they know not how to heal. In attempting to provide a remedy, we have attended to the evidence of the being, character, and attributes of God, and the injurious tendencies of atheism and scepticism.

We now call your attention to the subject of a revelation containing the laws and institutions of the moral government of God; and if we cannot discover them by reason and the light of nature, we must look for them in a revelation from God.

It is evident from the slightest inspection that man was not made to be regulated and governed by his instincts, appetites, and passions; for while these may guide animals safely, in men left to themselves they carry desolation and ruin through society.

But where shall such conservatory guidance be found, adequate to the elevation and perfection of the entire social state? To enlighten and elevate a few has been found practicable in many nations—in Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome; but nowhere have the masses been enlightened and purified, and made to rise. Egypt, with her towering obelisks and massy pyramids, was advanced in aristocratic civilisation; but while her kings and nobles rolled in splendour, her degraded millions toiled their life out for the food which sustained them, wasting their days unpitied in her vast quarries, in rearing the monuments of oppression and folly; and could we give the statistics of the coarse food, clothing, habitations, and small earnings of the labouring-classes of modern Europe, we should perceive what broad foundations the mountains of prey stand upon. In fact, a terrific gravitation has marked the masses of our world when bereft of revelation. No power of reason, or philosophy, or energy of government, has been able to bid them rise.

What is the matter?

Has the past history of the world been such as might have been anticipated from the unperverted wisdom and goodness of God? It has rather been a history of ignorance, despotism, pollution, and crime. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain until now.

Six thousand years have rolled away, and have inscribed on every page of their sad history the insufficiency of the light of nature, and the necessity of a revelation from God for the present and future well-being of man. But we have a book which claims to be from God, sent to us in compassion, for the illumination and salvation of our race. This book contains the predictions of a coming day, when the history of our race shall be reversed, and the whole world enlightened, purified, and blessed, by the dominion of Christ over the hearts and lives of men. The fact predicted Christians and sceptics both profess to believe—the one, from the efficacy of the Christian religion; the other, from the power of reason and philosophy in the arrangement of circumstances.

The principal ground of doubt concerning a revelation from God is the alleged sufficiency of the light of nature. And doubtless, if the light of nature is sufficient, a revelation would be superfluous; for though God is almighty, he is not wont to abound in vast superfluous efforts.

It will, therefore, be the object of this lecture to show that a revelation from God to man is indispensable to his temporal and eternal well-being. To accomplish this, we shall present in contrast the defects of the light of nature and the adaptation and power of the Bible.

1. The light of nature has never been sufficient to maintain practically the evidence of God's being and

character, or to prevent the prevalence of a cruel and corrupting idolatry. The heavenly bodies, departed heroes, animals, reptiles, and gods of wood and stone, have been the objects of national worship, the constituents of which, in all time, have been lust and blood. The temple has been a brothel, a slaughter-house, and sink of pollution, on whose altars human sacrifices have, in all nations, mingled their blood with the blood of animals; and, extensively, infanticide, and the burning of widows on the funeral pile, have constituted a revolting part. But what has the light of nature done to reverse the condition of the pagan world? Nothing.

These reverses, wherever they exist, have been exclusively the achievements of the Gospel and Christian institutions; and yet infidelity is now hailed as the rising of a new sun upon the world, to dispel its darkness, and wash away its pollutions, and emancipate the enslaved devotees of superstition, and elevate the priest-ridden millions to intelligence and virtue. But on what page of history are such triumphs of nature's light recorded, in elevating and purifying the masses of society? Is there no priestcraft in pagan nations, and no dark-minded, priest-ridden people? The priests of pagan worship are multitudinous; and their control, through ignorance and fear, despotic, and the expense of worship exorbitant. The price of their temples in a pagan nation would educate the people; and yet it is no part of the object of their priesthood to enlighten, but rather to continue the degradation of the human mind, that themselves may reap the harvest of ignorance and superstition. Get rid of priestcraft by the extermination of Christianity? It is Christianity, with her ministry and institutions alone, which keeps off those birds of night that fill the pagan world with fear and trembling, and restrains those floods

of pollution which have swept over the world wherever Christianity has not bestowed her light, and her efficient guardian care.

2. In the absence of the Christian religion, no just conceptions of the providential government of God have prevailed. Events have been ascribed to chance, to fate, or immutable certainty in the nature of things, or to myriads of local gods inhabiting earth, air, and sea, polluting the world by their example, and agitating it by their quarrels and capricious wrath—

> Gods hateful, changeful, petulant, unjust,
> Whose attributes are rage, revenge, and lust.

3. In the absence of the Bible, a dark uncertainty has prevailed respecting the immortality of the soul in a future state. The Greeks and Romans had their "Elysian Fields," where the spirits of their mighty dead assembled to talk over the deeds of time; and their Tartarus, a place of punishment for the vulgar wicked.

But the whole system was rejected by the intelligent as the mere fiction of poets, and the device of priests and legislators, despised by the inventors, and countenanced only for gain and popular restraint. Whether the soul were immortal or not, men of the most powerful minds, and extended research, and patient thought, could not tell; but believed, and hoped, and *feared*, with that uncertainty which always attends opinions of whose truth there exists no means of becoming sure.

4. The light of nature has never developed and maintained a correct and universal system of morals.

The mind of man is too limited, and experience is too slow, and the obliquities of the heart are too many and powerful, to lay out a pure and comprehensive chart of universal, practical, relative duty; and though a common

necessity has compelled the world, in self-defence, to stigmatise some actions as wrong and others right, yet scarcely a vice can be named which has not, in pagan lands, been canonised as an act of religion, or enrolled among the virtues. Ambition, pride, falsehood, theft, murder, and the most debasing impurities, and the most unnatural crimes have been sanctioned and approved. The best men in pagan history were, with few exceptions, men who in Christian lands would be regarded as stained by practices of flagrant immorality; and yet they shone as lights amid the darkness around them, and as examples of purity amid the mass of deeper pollution by which they were environed.

5. Beyond the pale of the Christian revelation, the life and comfort of man have been held in light estimation, and sported with for revenge, ambition, or gain, or as the means of pleasurable amusement. The gladiatorial shows, the treatment of women, the abandonment of infants by their parents, and of parents by their children, the treatment of slaves, and contempt and oppression of the common people by the rich and learned, are confirmations strong of this position.

6. The light of nature has no sanctions sufficient to form and sustain a pure and happy state of society.

The experience of a whole world shows that the constitutional advantages of virtue and evils of crime are impotent for the formation of moral principle and a pure and efficacious public sentiment against presumptuous wickedness. Human laws are limited and feeble in their power to reform and elevate society. A large portion of the virtue on which the happiness of families and of communities depends cannot be produced by coercion; and a large portion of the violations of right, and invasion of public and domestic purity, peace, and happiness, cannot

be restrained by human laws. They cannot reach the heart, nor provide motives, nor regulate the thoughts, nor prevent the conception of sinful desires. Amid a world prone to sin, and rushing headlong with passion and appetite, they can only prohibit and punish *actions;* and of these only such as can be proved in a court of justice, and probably not one of a thousand which war upon personal rights and happiness, and social safety and order.

There is no omniscient God of purity whose eye is ever open on the hearts, and thoughts, and words, and actions of transgressors; and no throne of justice from which there is no flight; and no Almighty power with which none can contend, and no certainty of sufferings endless, the wages of sin, which none can endure or escape.

7. Another defect of the light of nature is, that it has no institutions, and no authorised teachers of piety and morality, for the repetition of known truths and the application of motives, for the instruction and reformation of the mass of mankind.

Suppose that we had from nature all the light that revelation could give us—suppose that the light of nature should unroll its broad page athwart the sky, whereon, in letters of fire, should be written every precept of the moral law, and every motive to divert from sin, and secure holiness and happiness, what would be the result? Men would gaze a few times upon its burning page till it became familiar, and then disregard it. We need a living voice and institution for the repetition of instruction. Miracles themselves, were they habitual, would lose their power and become familiar as the stated laws of nature; even the Bible itself, sustained as it is by miracles, would not be sufficient. Its truths must be periodically and often reiterated and applied by those whose office it is to cry aloud and reiterate instruction and motive.

Undeniably, therefore, we need a day set apart for universal convocation, and for the express purpose of receiving repetitious instruction, and the reiteration of motives and impressions. This only would keep up the moral tone of society, and render the truths of revelation an habitual and efficacious reality.

But the light of nature provides no such institutions for the moral and religious instruction of mankind—no Sabbath of rest for the body, or of moral culture for the mind, and has no authority and no influence to induce mankind to lay aside the cares of this world, and convoke them for the worship of God and the education of the soul for heaven. It is only by such means that the masses of mankind have ever been elevated to intelligence and virtue ; and this has been done only in Christian lands, and undeniably by the efficacy of Christian institutions.

Admit that a few men of transcendent powers might grasp a correct system of religion and morals ; their discoveries would not supersede the necessity of a revelation, and they could not give ubiquity to their knowledge. Much is said of the attainments of the ancient philosophers. Suppose they did attain all the wisdom and virtue that is ascribed to them ; there were but a few of them in that age, and what could three, or four, or twenty schoolmasters, in a generation, do to educate the people of the United States ? Suppose all the mathematics of his day had been confined to Newton, what would have become of the science in the generation succeeding him ? It will not do to talk of Socrates or Plato, two or three dim stars that two thousand years ago shone with a greater brightness than the world around them, only because that world lay in such total darkness. These philosophical teachers stood upon an eminence, and around them might cluster a few disciples, while all the rest of mankind remained in the valley of the shadow of death. But the Christian re-

ligion provides teachers for the great body of mankind, and it is the only religion that does. If we read history, this fact stands out on every page. Even in the great and civilised Roman empire, the most polished and wealthy at one time on earth, no one thought of such a thing as educating the despised and oppressed people, whom they sneeringly called the "ignobile vulgus." It was not supposed that artisans, mechanics, agriculturists, and sailors—composing now that immense body of useful and respected citizens—could be improved in their morals and elevated in their characters by acquiring knowledge and by comprehending general truths. They were utterly left out of the question, and were looked upon almost as of a different race from the high-born and wealthy patrician. They were consigned over to the ignorance and debasement of uninstructed, uncared-for human nature; and philosophers and satirists spoke of them and ridiculed them as gone. It did not come within the compass of their thoughts to carry the influence of learning and of liberty down to the vast multitude, that heaving sea of human beings that rolled in brutal ignorance and slavery beneath them.

But what has Christianity done? It has done what such a religion as Christianity alone could do for the great mass of society. It has thrown light abroad from the throne to the cottage. It has taken the four corners of society, and lifted it up together. It has laid low the mountains, and raised up the valleys. It has exalted humanity from its lowest depths of slavery and ignorance, and is filling the earth with knowledge and virtue. It has bid the oppressed go free. It has taught the haughty monarch that he is but a man, and that his meanest subject is a man. It has united all the hearts of its true followers in one glorious enterprise for earth's emancipation and elevation.

Such an exhibition as is made nightly in our city, of

lectures accessible to all, and daily in our palace school-houses, accessible to all children, was never witnessed since the world began beyond the pale of Christianity.

8. The light of nature has never disclosed a way in which mortal, sinful man may be reclaimed to holiness, and pardoned and restored to favour.

I am not unacquainted with the flippant assertion made by sceptical minds that God can do by his omnipotence what he pleases, and reclaim and save as well without as with an atonement, can make impossible possible, wrong right, folly wise, and contradictions consistent. And if men are machines, doubtless they can be governed by omnipotence as machines. But if they are free agents, and made for moral government, and for reward and punishment according to their character and deeds, we might as well assume the possibility of desert in the orbs of heaven, whirled by omnipotence in their circuits, as in minds governed irresistibly by the same omnipotence.

But if mind can be governed, and character formed, and happiness secured, by divine omnipotence, without moral government, why has it not been done in the past history of the world? Has not God been almighty and good through all the past ages of time, while the whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain? and did not his benevolence prefer the happiness of men to misery? Why, then, being able, did he not make it sure? But if God's omnipotence and benevolence have not done this, if nations and individuals have sinned and suffered punishment, what evidence is there that benevolence and omnipotence will do hereafter what hitherto they have never done?

But if physical omnipotence is not, and moral government is, the energy by which God governs and blesses mind, how shall he sustain his violated laws while all

transgressions are forgiven? The light of nature affords no answer to this question. It is revelation alone that unites justice and mercy in the forgiveness of sin. The laws of nature may shine brightly around us, but they do not disclose a new and living way of reformation and pardon. Socrates reasoned on this subject, and could not perceive how God could maintain his moral government, and avert the penalties of transgression; and said to one of his friends, "We must wait till some one shall be sent from heaven to give us information." I have only to add that the light of nature has never availed to reach and rectify the heart of man, has never extirpated idolatry, has not mitigated selfishness, nor pride, nor ambition, nor envy, nor hatred, nor lust, nor cruelty and blood; while the Christian religion has inspired the heart of man with things pure and lovely and of good report, and has filled the world with institutions for the culture of the intellect, and the culture of the heart, and the elevation and happiness of the whole human family.

These things are not mere speculations, but matters of fact. The Bible contains truths and motives far above the light of nature. Its rewards and penalties are powerful; its institutions for the instruction of mankind are cheap and practical, and efficacious in the formation of character for the life that now is and the immortal life to come. It has not, indeed, revolutionised the world, because the world has hated and rejected it, or neglected and disobeyed it; while the Church of God has in all things come short, and in many things offended. But where have constitutions and laws ever perfected societies that disobeyed them? But, undeniably, Christianity has wrought a mighty change in human character and condition. It has developed in society a benevolence, and humility, and meekness, and self-denial, and a

vigour of intellect and enterprise, associated with purity in the family and the social state, such as no other influence has produced.

The following is the terrible description of the moral condition of society in the Roman empire in its highest state of science, the fine arts, civil liberty, and civilisation.

Rom. 1, 28—32. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: being filled with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

The learned Tholuck, by contemporaneous authorities corroborates this account, especially the licentiousness, which, he says, "pervaded all classes of the Roman empire, high and low," and was comprehended in their worship, disclosed in their paintings and statuary, polluted their poetry, and oratory, and philosophy.

There is evidence that in all heathen nations, at one time or another, human sacrifices were offered. In Rome, at the gladiatorial shows, thousands of men annually were slaughtered in conflict, for the amusement of the most refined men and ladies of the empire.

In India the burning of widows on the funeral pile of their dead husbands has been an immemorial practice, now slowly retreating before the humanising influence of Christian laws and institutions.

There is also in heathen lands, generally among the common people, a total destitution of moral principle in respect to truth and honesty. Sir William Jones, of learned memory, for some time Chief Justice in Bengal, declares that, in all his long experience, he had never known a native whose oath afforded him the least confidence of the truth of his testimony, and that it availed only as circumstantial evidence.

Universally, in heathen lands the lower classes are ignorant and poor, and in sickness are uncared for and miserable.

No hospitals were reared till Christianity built them; there were no taxations of the community for the support of the poor, and no voluntary associations for their relief, as in Christian lands, and no personal compassion; so that, from age to age, thousands and millions died unheeded and unwept. A universal hard-hearted "don't care" for human woe has characterised our race in all time and in all countries where the revelation of God and his Spirit have not awakened to compassion the sensibilities of our nature, and shed abroad benevolence in the hearts of men.

Buchanan, in his "Researches in India," some forty years ago, says, "We know that we are approaching Juggernaut, though we are fifty miles distant, by the bones of pilgrims which whiten the way." He says of the pilgrims that, when provisions failed, and cold storms of rain occurred, they gathered together in groups, without covering, and shivered and died, and often almost in winrows their dead bodies lined the road. At Juggernaut, he describes the whole region as offensive from the stench of unburned and putrefying bodies. The dogs, jackals, and vultures are horribly tame, from their habit of feeding on dead bodies. Sometimes they stand by the dying,

waiting for their breath to depart that they may devour them. He saw a woman dead, with her two little children beside her, and asked them where was their home: they said they had no home but where their mother was.

The obscenity of the worship of this idol in the action of the priests and the female inmates of the temple, and of the whole multitude of people, he says, was such, that he shuddered, and instinctively felt shame and guilt at being the spectator of such abominations.

From all this, and much more, it is evident that life in heathen lands is of no more estimation than the dust of the streets or worthless animals—that the vilest passions reign and the vilest deeds are done.

And in our own land, where emigration outruns Christian institutions, and infidels pre-occupy the soil, there the convocation of the Sabbath is at the tavern, instead of the sanctuary; and hunting, and gambling, and horse-racing, and drunkenness, and licentiousness, and fighting, and blasphemies, prevail, till the Bible and Christian institutions overtake them; and then these birds of ill-omen are transformed, or, screaming, fly away; and all these abominable scenes are superseded by the worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, the establish ment of Sabbath-schools and Christian libraries, and revivals of religion, and all the elements of pure, and lovely, and glorious Christian civilisation.

Thousands of new settlements in our land which have been thus demoralised, have in this manner been civilised and purified by Christian institutions.

And it, in our cities, the statistics of poverty, and crime, and licentiousness, and loathsome disease, and unutterable woe, be examined, where will their victims be found?—under the auspices of the Bible and Christian institutions, or under the auspices of infidelity, and in the haunts of

inebriation, and impurity, and cursing, and blasphemy, and murder?

I close this lecture with several remarks or inferences.

And first, it is manifest, in the light of this discussion, that reason and the light of nature are not sufficient to meet the exigencies of the personal, social, and civil welfare of our race; and that a revelation, and divine institutions and aids, are indispensable to the temporal and eternal welfare of men.

It may be said that the difference of condition between heathen and Christian lands is not occasioned by their different religions. But no other causes are apparent for those opposite results; and the adaptation of Christianity and idolatry to produce these opposite moral results is as manifest as is the adaptation of natural causes to produce their effects.

I am aware that it is boastingly said and reiterated that the Gospel and the Church of God have had their day, and, though they may have mitigated the evils of barbarous society, are wholly incompetent to afford the illumination and fulfil the vocations of reason and philosophy.

It might be well to publish the known abortive efforts of the three French revolutions, and of the recent infidel associations in Europe and in our nation.

I will only say, in the language of Holy Writ, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo! he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." It will be in time for infidels to boast, when the first infidel nation shall have rivalled our own in all that appertains to the highest personal, social, and civil welfare of man, for some twenty, fifty, or one hundred years.

Will it be contended that heathen lands are, and ever have been, as happy as Christian nations? If infidels

really believe this, let them, in imagination, as the French did by legislation, abolish the being of God, and burn the Bible, and substitute the theatre for the Sabbath, and establish for the children of our nation foundling hospitals, and provide professional nurses, instead of the warm bosoms and hearts of wives and mothers, and proclaim nature as the only God, and the family a den of mere animals, and write over the gateway of all burying-grounds that death is an eternal sleep. Let them abolish our happy republic, and establish in its stead the Pope, and the autocrats of Russia and Austria. Let our wives and daughters be slaves and drudges, and burn on the funeral pile of their husbands; and their infants be strangled, or burnt, or given to alligators in our bayous and rivers. Let purity cease from all families, and impurity mingle in our worship of nature, and pollute our poetry, and paintings, and statuary, and pour like a mighty river through our literature from the press. And let our theatres be stained annually by the blood of thousands of gladiators, trained to fight and die for the amusement of the most refined gentlemen and ladies of our nation. Let the feudal system come back in all its pleasures, and beauties, and glories, in which kings and nobles shall hold all the lands, and all beside be tenants at will, and most of them living on black bread, or potatoes, with seldom a mouthful of meat, and always on the borders of starvation; in sickness and old age to be sent to the poor-house, or abandoned to famine and neglect.

Let Juggernaut pilgrimages pave our roads, for twenty miles, with human bones, and create around them an atmosphere of stench, where dogs and jackals and vultures are gentle by moving among human beings, and feeding on human flesh, and where children have no home but beside their dead fathers and mothers.

And let our newspapers, in their obituaries, chronicle the death of Mr. ——, and give notice that the burning will be on —— day, at —— o'clock; that his beautiful young wife will burn with him; and should her courage fail, and she attempt to escape, the dishonoured family, and even her own son, will force her back into the flames.

LECTURE VII.

THE REPUBLICAN ELEMENTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It is not uncommon for infidels to insist that the Old Testament is unfriendly to the liberty and equality of man, the joint product of despotism and priestcraft, and destined to pass away before the rising illuminations of the present day; that it was formed in a dark, superstitious, and barbarous age of the world, and is inadequate to the further advancement of society in the present enlightened age.

Such opinions can result only from profound unacquaintance with the contents, history, and practical influence of this most authentic and venerable book—a book with which the more we become acquainted, the more we shall find that it has neither rival nor equal.

The most effectual way to remove this unhappy misconception and prejudice will be to illustrate the design and efficacy of the Old Testament, in the production of such a state of liberty and equality as never, before or since, blessed the earth, save, perhaps, in our own nation. Instead of its being unfriendly to civil liberty, we possess in the Old Testament the first pattern that ever existed of national liberty and equality. It is not generally known, and would scarcely be believed without inspection, that the Mosaic institute comprehends, in a high degree, all the elements and outlines of a federal national republican government, more resembling our own than any government *on earth* ever did, or now does.

It is but an epitome of this government that we can give in this lecture. But if we can render a concise account of its principles and relations intelligible at one view, it will be better than a more prolix description; and this is what we shall attempt to do.

It was the object of God, in the Mosaic institute, to fortify against the encroachments of idolatry, and stop the march of despotism, and lust, and blood, which, in its train, has ever darkened, and polluted, and cursed our world.

At the time of its establishment, the knowledge of God was fading from the world; the holy fire was going out from the hearts of men, and from his sacred altars; and all flesh was again corrupting its way before God. Nation after nation had turned their back upon him, and his commandments and worship. It was that he might not be ejected from his own world, and all remembrance of his being and government be blotted out by his rebel subjects, that, in infinite compassion, he interposed to fortify the knowledge of his being, character, and worship, till the desire of nations, the Messiah, should come.

For this purpose he called Abraham to be the father of a nation to whose care should be committed his Word and worship, and which, like a city compactly built, should stand on its rocky base, and defy the assaults of an apostate world.

After the bondage of his descendants for four hundred years in Egypt, Moses was raised up to be their lawgiver and captain; to plant them in Canaan, and to establish institutions for the preservation of true religion, till Christ, the Messiah, should visit the world, and die for its redemption.

The laws of Moses, revealed to him by God, and recorded in the Bible, include the three following classes:—

1. The moral law, which is obligatory upon all men, and capable of universal and perpetual application. It does not depend upon positive and specific enactments, but arises from the permanent and unchanging relations of men to God.

2. The second class of these laws relates to the peculiar rites and forms of Jewish worship, which are typical, local, and temporary, designed to meet the peculiar circumstances of that nation.

3. The third class are what may be denominated the constitution and laws of their civil government.

Now, because these laws, the ceremonial and moral and civil, are somewhat blended, the impression is made that the Old Testament is composed of a jumble of various laws, put together with reference to no intelligible design, and having no distinct result. Whereas, if we observe the *religion and morality* of the Old Testament, we shall find them the same as in the New. With respect to the *rites and ceremonies* of the Levitical code, they are but *shadows* of good things to come, and not the substance itself; and when they had answered their typical purpose, the shadows fled away, and the substance was established in their stead.

But it is of the *political laws* of the Old Testament that I shall now more particularly speak. To these I request a special attention, because it is in this view of the Mosaic institute that we shall see the republican tendencies of the Bible.

On these political institutions we observe—

1. That they are the enactments of Heaven: God delivered them to Moses, and Moses to the people. They are the laws which God condescended to bestow upon them as a pattern of his wisdom and an evidence of his benevolence; so that, if they are excellent, their excellence belongs to Him.

2. They preserve in the hands of the people as much personal liberty as ever was or can be combined with a permanent and efficient national government. The smaller the number of minds to be governed the freer the government may be; and the greater the number the greater the difficulty of a free government that shall be a sound one. Now, the patriarchal system of families, and heads of families, was the first, and simplest, and purest form of government; and we find that all the features of this form of government were preserved by Heaven, and united with the national government. These families united constituted tribes; and the tribes united for national purposes constituted the federal republic.

3. We observe again that this new combination of patriarchates and tribes was adopted by the suffrages of the people. When Moses, on the Mount, had written all the words of the Lord, he came down, and repeated them to the people; and the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the Lord has said will we do." Thus they accepted and adopted their constitution; it was chosen and adopted by the Jewish nation, as truly as the constitution of this country was adopted by the people. This adoption by the Jewish nation of the laws which Moses brought from God was repeated at the death of Moses; and, by a statute, once in seven years was to be repeated ever after by the assembled nation. So that, from generation to generation, once in seven years, the tribes met in a great national convention, and solemnly ratified the constitution. They took what might be called the freeman's oath to observe that constitution.

4. The administration of these laws was committed to men of their own choosing. The direction of Moses is, "Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you."

Do you elect, and I will commission them for their several offices.

5. The doctrine of appeals from the lower to the higher courts is distinct and remarkable. It was similar to what takes place in our country. The appeal might travel up from the lowest to the highest courts in each tribe, and thence up to the seventy elders, elected as assistants to Moses, and constituting the federal court, similar to the United States Supreme Court; and, in cases of great importance, the appeal might be given to God himself, who gave judgment from the table or temple.

6. We have called the civil constitution of the Old Testament a federal republic. It was so, in the highest sense. Each tribe, as to all purposes of government within itself, was perfectly independent, as each state is in our Union. They regulated all their own peculiar matters, and the national government did not intermeddle with them. So the tribes were each governed by their own laws; and those laws were as full of liberty as it is possible for laws to be, and still retain any force at all. I do not believe it possible for a people to be subject to a good conservative government, and be more free than the Israelites were in their respective tribes. They possessed, in given cases, even the right of peace and war. Their land belonged to them, and they did not ask the nation whether they might drive off trespassers and invaders; while, at the same time, they were federal for the support of God's worship, and to guarantee to each other their religion and form of government, and for their common defence against enemies, just as our government guarantees to each state civil and religious liberty, and defends against external or internal violence.

7. But the most admirable trait in this republican system is the distribution of land, which made every adult

male a landholder; not a tenant, but the owner himself of the soil on which he lived. This is the great spring of civil liberty, industry and virtue. By this simple arrangement, the great body of the nation were elevated from the pastoral to the agricultural state, and were at once exempted from the two extremes most dangerous to liberty—an aristocracy of wealth, and a sordid, vicious poverty.

The predominant shape of their society in Egypt was pastoral; but it was the design of Heaven to secure a state of society eminently adapted to virtue and liberty; and by this distribution of the soil to each individual and family, he made the whole nation agricultural. The single principle of universal ownership, in fee simple, of the soil, secured at once intense and universal patriotism, indomitable courage, untiring industry, and purity of morals; neither an hereditary nobility, nor a dependant peasantry, nor abject poverty, could exist. While the sun shone, or the streams flowed, and the hills remained, liberty and equality must exist among them.

But not only were they free from entailed estates and an hereditary nobility, every family possessing its own land, and every male member of the community owning his share of the soil—but, more than this, if by any means, in the inequalities of character or the changes of life, the family was compelled to alienate a portion of its land, it could not be done for a period longer than fifty years. If alienated the first year after the jubilee, it could not be retained for more than the fifty years; if in the twenty-fifth, for more than twenty-five; and sometimes it might come back in eight or ten, or even one year.

Thus the whole land was kept in the line of family descent; no poverty or vice on the part of a man could deprive his family of the privilege of inheriting its portion

of the soil—thus attaching them to the community as independent members, with all those inducements to freedom, and intelligence, and virtue, which appertain to the owners and cultivators of the soil.

If it should be said that the Jews were not pre-eminently distinguished for morality, I answer that, compared with the nations around them, and considering the age, and the standard of purity then existing, their morality was preeminent; and in the better portions of their history it was undoubtedly higher and purer than any that anywhere preceded the Christian dispensation.

Besides the regular officers of the constitution, there were judges, who were military leaders, raised up for special emergencies, and inspired with courage and skill for temporary purposes, but whose influence was only that of prowess and wisdom. They answered, in some degree, to the dictators, who, in circumstances of great national peril, were placed in power by the Romans. Such were Gideon, Jephthah, and many others.

For the religious instruction and reproof of the people, a succession of prophets was raised up, and continued through an extended portion of their history. These persons, inspired by Heaven, were able to look into future times, and, with the blessing and the curse upon their tongue, to warn, and rebuke, and exhort. They had no power but the sanctity of their lives and their fearless patriotism, which carried reproof and admonition alike to the cottage and the palace. The character of Samuel is an illustration: those who are curious upon the subject may read how the character of Samuel shone out, beginning from the consecration of him to God by his mother, and ending with his death. It is one of the purest characters ever inscribed on the page of history.

In addition to this government by their chosen officers,

the people themselves held, in a general convocation, a general supervisory power; as the people of the United States, by a general convention, can now modify their constitution. So that we have, in the civil constitution of the Jews, primarily, the simple, elementary, free, and primitive government of the patriarchs—the influence and ascendancy of age and eminence at the heads of large family circles. These families were then grouped into tribes, and these again into a nation, which, when called together upon great occasions, took up the subjects that came before them, and decided, ordered, and modified, according to their pleasure.

So that the constitution was as free as it could be; and it is doubtful whether their constitution and government could have been as perfectly free, and yet efficient, if God had not been ultimately the supreme executive. You see, then, how far from the fact is the apprehension that the Jewish institute is adverse to liberty and equality; and how far it is from being the product of a dark superstition, tyrannical and despotic. There is more liberty in it than we could bear, with all the illumination of the present day.

At the expiration of four hundred years, at the request of the nation, the executive authority was placed in the hands of a king; the people, nevertheless, being reproved for their folly, and warned of the encroachment on personal and public liberty which would be the consequence. Before that, God himself had been the supreme executive. But even now the republican form of the government was not changed; and the king, though nominated by Heaven, was accepted by the people by acclamation, and his authority regulated and limited by a covenant, called the "Manner of the Kingdom," so that in the beginning he was little more than a commander-in-chief of the republic.

The popular side of the government was still so influential; in the time of David, that even he, in some cases, did not dare to punish: although he was able to command the military power of the population, he did not dare to execute righteous judgment on Joab. "These sons of Zeruiah," he said, "are too hard for me."

The provision for the literary and religious education of the nation is not less admirable than that for the perpetuity of their equality and agricultural habits. The perpetuity of liberty among a people so rude and free as the Israelites were on entering Canaan demanded universal and immediate intellectual and moral culture. But how shall this be secured? They had come from a pastoral state in Egypt, and from a condition of bitter oppression, and had remained forty years in the wilderness untaught, and were unprepared for the liberty as a people could be; and yet some system of education must go into operation under every disadvantage, even while they were driving the Canaanites out, and winning by the sword the lands which God had given them. How, then, was this to be secured? The power of the press was unknown, and transcription of school-books impossible. The exigency demanded an immediate supply of oral instruction, both for the ministrations at the altar and for the schools; and divine wisdom met the exigency by setting apart one whole tribe out of the twelve to superintend the comprehensive interests of literature and religion. It was God's potent arm that did it. No other nation in the world, at that day, was as well educated as the children of Israel.

But it is objected that the priesthood were paid at the extravagant rate of one-tenth of all the income of the nation, and that their support was too heavy a charge upon the nation. But just observe that, as teaching was

to be their profession, they were released from the care of the soil, and their land divided among the tribes, with a reservation of one-tenth of the national income for their support. This, considered as in part a compensation for the land they relinquished, as well as for all the professional labour performed by them as ministers, teachers, physicians, scribes, lawyers, and registers, was no more than a reasonable compensation for their capital and services. The Jewish priesthood was sustained, and probably honourably sustained; but they were no more than paid for the property they gave up, and the services they rendered for the support of education, and all the great religious interests of the country; forming, as they did, the great body of the learned men of the nation. This priesthood was not sequestered in cells and cloisters, nor separated by celibacy from domestic endearment, and rendered a standing army of unmarried ecclesiastics, unallied by the common affinities of blood and interest to the nation. The blood of the whole nation ran as freely through their veins as of any tribe: the heart of the Levite and the heart of the nation beat in unison. They were, through all the tribes, fathers of families, and so dispersed and allied by intermarriages with the whole body of the nation as to know the condition and feel every pulsation of the national heart.

In addition to this national polity, there are a few peculiarities which demand notice and admiration. One is the convocation of all the males in the nation at Jerusalem three times a-year. Observe that it was the object of God to maintain his worship pure, to keep alive his knowledge and his doctrine, and to exclude the nation from any mingling in the idolatrous worship of the nations around them; and to carry this testimony down in a pure channel to the time of the Messiah.

In order to accomplish this, they assembled thrice a-year, to form acquaintances with the purest and best men of the nation, to reciprocate information, form friendships, allay jealousies and local animosities, and afford opportunities for consultation and forming concert of action, and for the diffusing a healthful public sentiment through the nation, bound by common ties of interest to their central city, Jerusalem; and how endeared to the hearts of the people by these fraternal meetings! How delightful to have lived and gone up with these tribes of God, in their great convocations, to maintain his worship, and to honour his name! What greetings, what fond recollections, what friendly sympathies, must have been formed—a centre, to spread their blessed influence to the remotest corners of the land! What interchanges of kindness, what development of mind and thought and sympathy, what national ardour, what mutual incitements to virtue, greatness, patriotism, and piety must these great national meetings have produced! There they were, met for the worship of God, in their great and beautiful city, surrounded by all the endeared associations of childhood, and reminded of their past history and high distinction as a people by the striking and significant symbols there preserved of God's goodness and power to his chosen race. Oh, the wisdom and benevolence of the great God! How perfectly he understood the national frame, and how beautifully he adapted this simple, this touching institution, to shut out idolatry, and maintain his pure religion!

Another peculiarity was, the care to inculcate humanity and mercy. Of this, the law for the protection of birds and their young, and the prohibition of cruelty to animals, are instances. It may seem a little matter, but it is significant. He that is merciful in small things is humane in great. Exemption from military exposure for one year

after planting a vineyard, or building a house, or marrying a wife, is another instance of this care. What a considerate regard to the refined feelings of human nature lies in this peculiar law, that when a man has set his heart on enjoying some peaceful work of national utility, some plan of provision for his children, some new and dear relation of life, he shall have peace; the rugged scenes of war shall not sweep over him, his life shall not be put in jeopardy. This surely was not an emanation from the age and times around them: it was the inculcation of Heaven.

The care to prevent retaliations and assassinations for unintentional destruction of life, by the appointment of cities of refuge, is another peculiarity of the Mosaic institutions. The reiterated inculcations of honesty in dealing, and of equity in the administrations of justice, especially in respect of the poor, the stranger, the widow and the fatherless, form another example of wisdom and benevolence. The purity of the family also was guarded with peculiar care, and the rights and relative duties of parents and children; and the whole, in addition to the sanctions of eternity, was, as a civil code, sanctioned by all the blessings and all the curses of a remunerative and retributory providence. It comes out in tones of thunder; it bursts forth in every page of the Levitical code; it shone as in letters of fire before the gaze of the children of Israel at every step, and stands out conspicuous through the Old Testament, wherever one reads. And had the nation been as pure as their laws required them to be, they would certainly have been a nation pre-eminently holy and happy.

Such is the epitome of the first and only civil government which God ever instituted and administered; and it is worthy of all admiration. That this form is republican, securing religious and intellectual culture, and

liberty and equality in the highest possible degree consistent with united national government, cannot be denied by anyone.

Far back in the infancy of nations, for the preservation of divine truth and worship, a republic free as ever existed, and yet compact, intelligent, and efficient, was instituted, which was submitted to and adopted by the people; a nation of landholders, owners of the soil by a tenure which excluded alike a voluptuous nobility, and a landless, reckless poverty, the most terrific material of republics: a republic whose blessed outlines survived all changes by kingly power, and vicissitudes of corruption and captivity, and, with its sacred charge—the oracles and worship of God—baffled idolatry, and brought salvation down to the times of the Messiah.

These republican institutions introduced by Moses contain strong internal evidence of the divine original of the Old Testament, independent of the testimony of miracles and prophecies.

This evidence is, that no existing knowledge in or around the nation, no examples, and no powers of the human mind, were sufficient to account for the existence of an institution to whose excellence the world has scarcely reached with all the light of the present day. They are an effect for which no adequate human cause existed at that day, and indicate as clearly an origin above human intellect as miracles indicate a power above human power.

We are not now more republican than they were, though we have the gathered experience and light of all ages before us. With a constitution and laws brought from the best wisdom of the whole earth, and matured by the ripest experience of the human mind in a Christian, and civilised, and scientific age, we have no better system now

on earth than belonged to that nation of bondmen, rude shepherds from the slavery of Egypt, after wandering for forty years in a wilderness. Now, tell me where this system came from. Amid the total darkness of that semi-barbarous age, could a system so pure and bright, so permanently endeared to the choice of the people, have been struck out by human wisdom? We can no more account for it by the known laws of the human mind than for the stopping of the sun by the voice of Joshua.

Delightful as are the sounds of liberty and equality, it is an exotic in our dark and wicked world. The pride and selfishness of man, ever the antagonist principles of equality, are tending constantly to extremes—rushing up to the extremes of power, and falling down to the debasement of ignorance, poverty, and crime. But that happy medium where all are free and independent, none but God in that distant age knew how to secure; and here, amid the darkness, a light rises—a well-balanced republic, which, amid corruptions, temptations, and vices, and captivities, and arms, brought all its elementary treasures, with the oracles of God, down to the Gospel day.

My last remark is that our own republic, in its constitution and laws, is of heavenly origin. It was not borrowed from Greece or Rome, but from the Bible. Where we borrowed a ray from Greece or Rome, stars and sun were borrowed from another source—the Bible. There is no position more susceptible of proof than that, as the moon borrows from the sun her light, so our constitution borrows from the Bible its elements, proportions, and power. It was God that gave these elementary principles to our forefathers, as the "pillar of fire by night, and the cloud by day," for their guidance. All the liberty the world ever knew is but a dim star to the noon-day sun which is poured on man by these oracles of Heaven.

It is truly testified by Hume that the Puritans introduced the elementary principles of republican liberty into the English constitution; and when they came to form colonial constitutions and laws, we all know with what veneration and implicit confidence they copied the principles of the constitution and laws of Moses. These elementary principles have gone into the constitution of the Union and of every one of the States; and we have hence more consistent liberty than ever existed in all the world, in all time, out of the Mosaic code.

And this is the secret of our success. We have reason to hope that our free government will endure. Let us so hope, so pray, and hold on to our faith in God that he will not permit the institutions of liberty which he has given to man for freedom to perish from the earth. I beseech you, do not oppose the crude objections of sceptics to the experience of the world, to the light of the Bible. It is the anchor of republics. Do not let your minds be carried away by specious sophistries from that wisdom which is based upon evidence and adapted to the wants of human society. If the young mechanics of our cities will revere the Bible, will read the Bible, will study the Bible, and form their understandings and hearts by the Bible, I shall say, as Simeon did when he clasped and blessed the infant Saviour, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" My dear friends, a better defence of civil and religious liberty than the consecrated hearts of the young mechanics of the land cannot be desired. Let them gather round and guard the ark of God, and it will be safe and victorious for ever.

LECTURE VIII.

THE IDENTITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW.

THIS is a subject upon which a vast amount of misapprehension prevails. Many regard the Old Testament as containing a different religion from the New, "imperfect, earthly, obscure, and adapted only to the childhood of the human race, and chiefly useful in preparing the way for the Christian religion, as revealed in the Gospel—a record of the Hebrew and not of the Christian faith, and calculated, as some have said, to neutralise our conceptions of God, to localise him as a tutelar divinity, instead of the omnipresent God of the universe; to give prominence to his power, and throw his moral perfections into relative obscurity; amplifying his wrath, while the SUN of his mercy is hid by the dark storm of his vengeance; producing slavish fear and dark superstition, instead of humble confidence and filial love; a religion of forms, instead of the worship of the heart, and of actions instead of principles and affections; leaving the future veiled in doubt and uncertainty, and imparting a new sorrow and a deeper darkness to the tomb; that its morality is low, and suited only to the circumstances of the Jews, and to be superseded by the purer, nobler morality of the Gospel."

The authors of these representations are not professed infidels; and yet the first generation of English deists spoke more respectfully of the Old Testament, and with less exaggerated misrepresentations.

Indeed, if such conceptions of the Old Testament are

just, it would be as difficult to see its adaptation to the "childhood" as to the manhood of the world; and as difficult to see its adaptation to prepare the way for the Christian religion as to see how a book of fables should prepare the way for authentic history, or debasing error the way for a pure and correct belief. As well provide a book of directions for the hunting-life as a preparation for agriculture; or on the dressing of skins for clothing as a preparation for the manufactories of civilised life.

It must be remembered that the Jewish polity comprehended the political, ecclesiastical, and moral laws of the nation. The first we have considered. The third—the moral laws of the Old Testament—will now claim our attention, as identical with the New.

We might infer this identity from the immutability of God, and the immutable relations of creatures to the Creator and to one another, and what we should anticipate we find to be the fact. The Old Testament and the New give us the same account of the being, attributes, and character of God as distinguished from the attributes, laws, and operations of matter.

He is not represented in the Old Testament as a local divinity, but as the God of the whole earth, the God of the universe, inhabiting eternity and filling immensity, a spirit, a free agent, wise, holy, just, merciful and good.

We see, then, that God is not materialised in the Old Testament to the apprehension of any but those who do not understand the difference between personification and metaphor and literal language. On the contrary, every power of language is employed to exalt our conceptions of God above the attributes and operations of finite, local divinities, or the unthinking, involuntary energy of the material universe. The ascription to him of a human

form and human passions is metaphor which no intelligent common schoolboy would misunderstand.

It was the great effort of the world at that day to establish the reign of pantheistic nature, or of idol gods. The object of God, in his word and institutions, was to rescue from oblivion, and send down through all time, the knowledge of his being, and person, and character, as an infinite, almighty, benevolent *Spirit*; and language so powerful, so conclusive and beautiful, was never before or since conceived or uttered. This was the very point of controversy between God and his whole alienated world; they were constantly tending downward toward debasing idolatry, and forgetful of his unity, spirituality, and universality. They would blot out his incorruptible image for that of birds, and beasts, and creeping things; and it was against this tendency that God set himself. It was for this reason that he gave those manifestations of his character and declarations of his will to counteract those dark and debasing views which it was the whole object of the idol world to establish and render universal. Therefore he demands, "Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" And thus taught and believing, David exclaims, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth and the sea, even there should thy hand lead me, and thy right hand uphold me."

In like manner do the moral attributes of God burst out in the Old Testament, shining like the sun in his strength, unrivalled even by any exhibition in the New. "The Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, for-

giving iniquity, transgression, and sin, who will by no means clear the guilty." "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty!" "As the heaven is high above the earth, so is his mercy to them that fear him." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

Where in beauty, or power, or glowing imagery of language do you find anything equal to it? Where in the new Testament do you find the enraptured reiteration, "Praise ye the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever," calling upon nature to wake up, and mingle all its voices in the universal song? The Church of the new dispensation and the redeemed in heaven borrow their most glowing language of poetry, and eloquence, and power, from the Old Testament. The Psalms of David have never been surpassed, and probably never will be equalled but by the enraptured worship of heaven.

The same account is given of the moral law in the Old Testament and the New, as demanding the whole heart for God, and enforcing impartial benevolence to men, friends and foes. All the relative duties of the Ten Commandments are recognised in the New Testament; while the law, in its precepts and sanctions, is made as enduring as the universe of mind to be governed by it. The morality, therefore, of the Old and the New Testament is the same: the same temperance, chastity, honesty, industry, justice, veracity, humanity, forgiveness, and charity to the needy, is alike inculcated in both.

It has been assumed that the Old Testament, and especially the Pentateuch, did not teach the immortality of the soul, and the retributions of the future state. It is admitted that in the political legislation of the Pentateuch the sanctions of the future state are not employed as distinctly as in other portions of the Old Testament,

and in the New; and for the obvious reason that, acting as the political lawgiver of the nation for temporal and temporary purposes, God enforced his political laws, like other lawgivers, by a special intensity of temporal sanctions. He made the air more healthful or pernicious, and the soil more fruitful or sterile, and their enemies more peaceful or aggressive, and prowess in battle more irresistible or impotent, as they obeyed or disobeyed his statutes.

But while he thus legislated as a political lawgiver, he did not waive his claim to the best affections of their hearts, or conceal the sanctions of eternity. All these had descended by tradition through the patriarchs, and were revealed anew by Moses, and mingled their moral influence with these civil institutions, as Christianity now lends its conservatory power to our political institutions. *The immortality of the soul, and the sanctions of the future state, are recognised in the Pentateuch, and were known in the Church from the time of Abel to the time of Christ.*

The evidence is short and undeniable. The *faith* of the New Testament has for its object the future state—the rewards and the penal sufferings of eternity. It is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." But the same faith is, in the epistle to the Hebrews, ascribed to Abel, Abraham, and the other patriarchs. "By faith, Abel was enabled to offer a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith, Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark. By faith, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect *unto the recompense of reward, and endured as seeing him who is invisible.* By faith, Abraham sought a *city which hath foundations, whose*

builder is God. By faith, his descendants looked for *a better, even a heavenly country.* All these died in faith, not having *received the promises, but having seen them afar off.*" These promises had not respect to temporal good, but to the blessings of the future state. What shall we say to these things? Does the Bible ascribe no faith in futurity to Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Moses?

But there is further evidence. The Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul, and a future state; but the Saviour silenced them by an argument from the Pentateuch. He quoted the declaration, "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob;" and his argument was, God, in this declaration, recognises an existing covenant between himself and these patriarchs; therefore, the covenantees, as really as the covenanter, exist. For God is not the God of the dead, of the non-existent, but of the living; therefore, these patriarchs are alive with God in heaven. What is meant by heaven? Is it not the world of especial divine manifestation and perfect society, the residence of God, and of the angels, and of the righteous redeemed? And did the Jews possess no conception of such a world? The Pharisees exulted in their belief of it, as rendering them more orthodox than the Sadducees. Whence did they derive their belief? Not from the New Testament, for it was not yet written; but from the Old, and from Job, as old as Moses, and Daniel on the resurrection. Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my death worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." And Daniel says, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine as the

firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." What is this but the faith and the doctrine of a future state and a resurrection? How can we doubt or question that such was the doctrine of the Old Testament?

The doctrines of the Old and New Testaments are the same. There is the same account given in both of God's mode of being—three *Persons* in one divine nature—and of his everlasting ways. They give the same account of the fall of man and its consequences (in Genesis and Romans), of man's entire depravity, and the necessity of regeneration for every human heart. The Old Testament declares that men have all gone out of the way, they are altogether vile, and that there is none that doeth good—no, not one; and the Apostle Paul quotes the language of the Old Testament in the New to prove, and says *it does prove,* Jew and Gentile to be all under sin.

Regeneration by the sovereign efficiency of God's Spirit is taught in both the Testaments. "A new heart will I give you; and I will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh." There is the same account in both of Christ the Messiah as God and man. He is called God in the Old and the New Testaments; and in both is also called a man, and in both are the attributes and works of man and God ascribed to him. There is no solution of this reconcileable with the inspired verity of the Bible but that he was God manifest in the flesh.

There is the same account of the death of Christ in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and in his own account—of giving his life for the sheep; and in Paul's—that God set him forth a propitiation for sin that he might justify him that believeth.

We find in the Old Testament and in the New the same conditions of pardon for sin: repentance and trusting

in the Lord, in the Old—and repentance and faith in Christ, in the New: while both refer to the righteousness of Christ as the meritorious cause; only the Lord Jesus Christ is more distinctly revealed in the New than in the Old. In the latter we find such language: "Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness." "He shall be called the Lord our righteousness." And in the former: "That I may be found in him, not having on mine own righteousness, but that which is by faith in Christ:" while in both Testaments the promises, threatenings, exhortations, and warnings are the same.

The language of experimental piety in the Old Testament is unsurpassed by anything in the New. In copiousness, and variety, and sublimity, and beauty, and in power of metaphor and poetry of diction, it surpasses the New.

I may add that the Lord Jesus Christ never professed to teach a new religion, but only to amplify and fulfil what had been revealed by Moses and the prophets. "Think not," he says, "that I came to destroy the law and the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." To the Jews, he said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The word *Scripture* was the name applied as familiarly to the Old Testament by the early Christians as the word *Bible* is now to both books. When the rich man in hell lifted up his eyes in torment, and besought Abraham to send some one to warn his brethren on earth to escape the pains of hell, the reply was, "They have Moses and the prophets: if they hear not them, neither would they be persuaded though one went to them from the dead." In other words, they have the means of salvation, if they choose to avail themselves of them.

The Gospel was preached to the Antediluvians by Noah, and to the Jews in the wilderness; and men in all

ages have been justified by faith. Faith could look forward to a Saviour to come, as well as it can look back to a Saviour who has come.

The Bereans were commended because, when apostles preached, they tried their doctrines by the Old Testament —the "Scriptures," which they "searched daily" to see whether these things were so—"the holy Scriptures," able to make wise unto salvation. They searched the *Scriptures* to see whether the apostles preached right. This was their test of the apostles' doctrines, and the apostles commended them for so doing.

Again, it is said that "the Jews tempted Christ;" that the prophets spake by the "spirit of Christ which was in them." (1 Pet. 1, 11.)

The Old Testament is supported by the same kind of external evidence which supports the New—the evidence of miracles and prophecy. It contains the same internal evidence; because it gives the same views exactly of God and man—of the moral laws of Jesus Christ and the Gospel, and its morality and sanctions. If you believe what is revealed in the New Testament, you believe what is revealed in the Old; for "they are they," says Christ, "which testify of me."

But, besides this, Jesus Christ and the apostles refer continually, in their discourses and writings, to the Old Testament as an inspired volume, in illustration and confirmation of what they advance in the New. The quotations of this kind in the New Testament from the Old —and quotations *as from Scripture*—are very numerous, and from nearly all the books of the Old Testament. The following are the books quoted from, with about the number of quotations:—Genesis, 24; Exodus, 24; Leviticus, 13; Numbers, 1; Deuteronomy, 42; Joshua, 1; 2 Samuel, 1; 1 Kings, 2; Job, 1; Psalms, 75;

Proverbs, 10; Isaiah, 81; Jeremiah, 11; Daniel, 3; Hosea, 6; Joel, 4; Amos, 3; Jonah, 4; Micah, 3; Nahum, 1; Habakkuk, 1; Haggai, 1; Zechariah, 6; Malachi, 8. They all make about three hundred and twenty-eight quotations, respect almost every book, and are always referred to as passages from the *Scriptures.* Thus by Jesus Christ and the inspired writers of the New Testament is recognised the inspired authority of the Old.

From this identity of the Old and New Testament I infer the undoubted inspiration of the Bible.

In the composition of the Old and New Testaments between forty and fifty different writers have been concerned. They were not contemporary with each other, but lived along through a period of three thousand years or more, occupying different stations in society, possessing different talents and characters, and placed in different circumstances; and yet they are as uniform in all the great outlines of the divine character, and in the laws of God, and morality, and religion, as if all had been dictated by one mind, and had been written in one year. But would so many human minds, in such circumstances, have made the Old and New Testaments so identical? There is no alternative but to believe that it was God's mind which produced the unity. The holy men of God were inspired by him to reveal the same truths; and when we see what purity, and unity, and power, and identity of doctrine, is impressed upon the book, making it the same system all the way down, though its parts were written at distant intervals through a period of three thousand years, we say, "This is the finger of God." The particles of matter might as well unite of their own accord, in making a living human body, as forty uninspired minds, in different and distant ages, conspire to

construct such a sublime, harmonious Bible. My friends, are you not satisfied with the evidence? For my own part, I am satisfied. In following this course of reasoning, we are not following "cunningly-devised fables." It is not upon light or inconclusive reasoning that we point to the Bible as the book of God, whose pure and enduring light has illumined the world, and will continue to shine purer and brighter till the coming of the day-spring from on high.

One word more, and that is, that the candid and diligent reading of this book will do more to satisfy an intelligent mind than all the exhibitions of it, however able, which its best advocates can present. If the efforts of its advocates to prove its authenticity and value are not followed up by the study of the book itself, they will do but little to advance the heart or enlighten the mind. These efforts I hope and expect that God will bless; but unless you take the book in hand with a candid mind, and a humble desire to learn the truth for yourselves, and become fellow-workers with me in the efforts I have been making, the work will fall short. Do this, and the book will make you wise unto salvation. Do this, and you will perceive the truth of God beaming upon you. It will fill your minds and hearts with life and joy, satisfy your doubts, teach you wisdom and faith. Read this volume with prayer to God that you may learn the truth; and in the progress of your reading all the mists of darkness will be dispelled by new and satisfying illuminations, and your hearts, which find no rest in the creature, will find rest in God.

LECTURE IX.

THE BIBLE A REVELATION FROM GOD TO MAN.

WE have seen the impotency of reason and the light of nature to meet the exigencies of man in time or eternity; and that the Bible, in its adaptation to our necessities, meets all our exigencies, personal, social, and civil, in a manner more rational and benignant than any other system that claims a parentage from God. So that, if God has given to man a revelation, the Bible has pre-eminently a claim to that distinction; and yet, strong as this presumptive evidence is, we admit that evidence more direct and unequivocal is desirable, and, if the Bible is a revelation from God, what we should strongly anticipate.

But how can the Bible be authenticated as a revelation from God? This is a very natural and proper question, and one which, we admit, we are bound to answer. For it is true that man cannot believe, or be obligated to believe, without evidence. Neither tradition, nor history, nor the Church, nor the State, nor councils, nor the Pope, will avail. We must have somehow the testimony of God to assure us of the inspiration of this Book. We must have the broad seal of Heaven, which none can counterfeit, set upon it, or we cannot give it credence. There must be actions performed in attestation of its inspiration, of which none but God could be the author; and these actions must be so connected with the testimony of those who claim to have been inspired as

to compromit the divine veracity if their testimony is not true.

It is admitted that He only who made the universe can sustain and govern it; there may have been many wonderful things done by *finite* beings of superhuman powers, but they can neither create, nor sustain, nor govern the world. He that created and he that upholds and governs all things is God.

We must admit also that the great laws of the material universe are so far uniform in their operations as that, if any marked suspension takes place—if, in the midst of their even and regular career, they are suddenly stopped, and a power greater than their own interposes to control them—that power is God's; and if the man in whose favour such interposition is granted claims to be commissioned to reveal the will of God to man, and in support of his claim adduces this divine interposition, which has been brought upon the laws of nature in connexion with his testimony, then we must believe that God sanctions it as true. The interposition is the great seal of Heaven stamped upon his commission; it discloses the omnipotence of God, confirming the claim to inspiration.

A voice from heaven would not answer the purpose. If a man were to inform the world that he had heard a voice from heaven, how few would believe him! How much room would there be for scepticism and ridicule! "You heard a voice, did you, saying, 'I am God, and such is my will?' But how do you know it was the voice of God? Other invisible spirits possibly may speak. How do you know but that it may have been they that spoke? and how do we know that your testimony is true—that you heard a voice, and do not testify falsely?"

A bright angelic visitant, with sparkling eyes, and glittering wings, and glowing tongue, would not suffice

without the proper signature of God to his mission. For who can tell whether he was truly an angel of light or Satan transformed? Our faith would not rest on *God*, but on the *angel;* and whether he came from heaven or not would rest on his *own* testimony, and not on the testimony of God.

Suppose a *man* should present himself to me, and say, "Sir, I perceive that you are in great darkness, and I am sent to teach you the way to God." I should reply, "I am much obliged to you, but what evidence have you to show that God has sent you? I am very much in the dark and need teaching; but I want to know who my teacher is, and whence he derives his commission to teach me." He says, "I can perform a thousand wonderful things, which you cannot account for. I can perform things superhuman, and show you wonders which no mortal man can perform." "It may be so; and yet these wonders may not surpass the powers of created agents, for both in heaven and hell there are mighty spirits. Now, how am I to know that your aid is not from the Father of Lies to deceive me? Can you control the laws of nature? Can you call down or stop the showers of heaven? Can you send pestilence and drive away disease? Can you raise the dead? Can you stop the sun? These are the seal of Heaven, unquestionably. Show me, then, this seal on your commission, and I will believe that you are sent of God, and authorised to teach his will. If, at your bidding, the sun stops in his course, and the rain for years is suspended—if volcanoes blaze and earthquakes rock the solid world at your command, I have the evidence from God that you are sent by him to instruct me. I ask no more; I am sure that you, by your own power, could not do these things, and that none other but the power of God could do them; and that God, by these

interpositions, sustains your claim of being sent by him to instruct me."

But such are the evidences upon which we rely to substantiate the Bible as the word of God's revelation for our guidance for time and eternity; and this evidence is contained in the miracles and prophecies connected with that book.

A *miracle* is such a control or suspension of the laws of nature as none but God, who made the world, can accomplish; and in such relations to a revelation as give it the divine attestation.

Prophecy is a declaration of future events which no finite mind could foresee or conjecture, any more than it could work miracles.

These are evidence every way fitted to command attention, to make impression, and to produce conviction; so that when a miracle is wrought, and it is witnessed by multitudes in open day, or when a prophecy is made, and it is found that the records of future history in all respects fulfil it, such evidences of revelation demand the credence of men. There is, it is true, a certain credulity in the human mind, which, to a certain extent, and for a time, is satisfied with the mere supernatural appearance of what they cannot explain; but when a real miracle is wrought under the circumstances which prove it really a miracle, according to the definition given, it always carries conviction to the human mind.

But to these considerations it is objected:—

1. That the laws of nature are perfect; that God made them for wise and benevolent ends, and adapted them to all the ends for which they are made; and that they do not need to be helped out by any innovations and substitutions of God's power to bring about results of his government; that we are not to suppose that there could

be occasion in a perfect government of laws for God's interposing to produce results which *would* not be reached by the comprehensive adaptation of his laws to those objects. An alleged necessity for miracles, it is said, implies defect in the original plan, which needs to be helped out by a constant resort to expedients.

ANSWER.—The laws of nature *are* perfect for all the ends they were established to accomplish; and if to bring out *those results*, constant miracles were needed, it would imply defect. God made the earth to produce wheat, &c.; and if, nevertheless, it would not produce wheat without a miracle—if the arteries would not carry the blood—if the lungs would not suffice for breathing, or the stomach for digestion—if the ox for the plough were not able to draw it, and the sun which was made for light were not able to shine, and after all that God has done through all his works an act of immediate omnipotence was indispensable to bring out the results intended, the laws of nature would *then* be like the machine for perpetual motion, which, when finished and ornamented, had but one defect, which was, *that it would not go.*

But in the laws of nature there is no such defect, and miracles are intended to supply no such deficiency; and the laws of nature do move on in their regular course, and do accomplish all they were designed to accomplish. The attributes of matter, so far as we know them, are uniform in their properties, developments, and uses. Fire always burns, the sun always gives light; and all the elements which go to make up God's universe of matter *are* uniform, and perfectly efficient to all the great ends for which they were provided; so that miracles are not needed to mend them, nor do they help them out. They but interpose to accomplish a purpose which their regular movement was not made to accomplish, and which their

occasional suspension only can reach, namely, to give attestation to a divine revelation, a thing which the laws of nature were not intended to do, and cannot do. The daily rising of the sun does not do it, nor do the regular operations of nature do it; and it is only by the ordinary perfect uniformity of these laws that extraordinary miraculous interposition of God is made manifest, showing that it is God who has done it.

The argument, therefore, that a miracle implies a defect in the constitution and laws of nature is without foundation.

OBJECTION 2.—But it is objected that it is not credible that even for *such* an end God should be continually disturbing the course of nature, and unsettling the foundations of experience and confidence.

No, it is not to be expected; and if miracles did this, the objection would have its weight. But all the miracles that God has wrought, from the beginning to the present day, have not had the least effect to bring uncertainty on the regular and thus far uniform movements of the laws of nature.

There is as much confidence in the regular rising and shining of the sun as if it had not been stopped once at the bidding of Joshua, or veiled in preternatural darkness once at the crucifixion of our Saviour; and while miracles stand out conspicuous, the sun still shines, and all the great laws of nature hold on their course. There is the same confidence in the regular return of seed-time and harvest, and the necessity of human cultivation, as if three millions of people had not been fed by bread from heaven for forty years—as if Elijah had never been fed by the ravens—and as if the Lord Jesus Christ had never fed five thousand men with five loaves and a few fishes. There is as much confidence in the necessity of using the [illegible] of

physicians as if Christ and his apostles had never healed the sick with a touch, or raised the dead to life by a word. Miracles are not so frequent as to destroy at all the general uniformity which makes the suspension to stand out as an unquestioned act of direct omnipotence, and an infallible attestation of the divine inspiration of the message thus authenticated.

OBJECTION 3.—It is said that, however valid the evidence of a miracle may be to those who witness it, no human testimony can possibly authenticate the existence of a miracle to those who did not see it; for the laws of nature are uniform, and a miracle is contrary to all human experience. It is, of course, more probable that men should lie than that the laws of nature should be suspended.

This is the celebrated argument of Hume, by which, no doubt, he supposed that he had thrown down the pillars of revelation; but in the answer of Campbell, his pupil, he lived, it is said, to see and confess its fallacy, though he had not the magnanimity openly to retract it—a mournful illustration of the aberration of acute and powerful minds, when under the influence of prejudice and an aversion to the truth. Than Hume few men have possessed a more powerful intellect or greater acuteness; but in this instance he argued with marvellous shallowness and inconclusiveness, and even ridiculousness; for his argument, when it is once touched by the wand of logic, is turned instantly into the shallow and ridiculous sophistry. Let us touch it, and see what becomes of it. "A miracle," he says, "is contrary to the universal experience of mankind."

This is denied; for multitudes have recorded their testimony that they have witnessed miracles—credible witnesses, too; for they were furnished with every possible

opportunity and motive to detect a fallacy, and they staked character, property, and life, and eternity on a revelation authenticated by miracles which they say they saw.

The assumption, then, that miracles are contrary to all human experience is controverted by the most indubitable evidence on the pages of history; and we see, therefore, that miracles *are not contrary* to the universal experience of man. Besides, there has been scarce a nation on earth whose traditions could not recognise the existence of miracles. The claim, then, that miracles contradict the universal experience of man is contradicted by an almost universal tradition to the contrary. We know not what has been in past ages but by history and tradition; we do not even know that the sun has risen every twenty-four hours. We know nothing of the past but by testimony of man; and by this we are assured both of the general uniformity of the laws of nature and their occasional suspension.

But, in the second place, we say that, were there no recorded experience of miracles, they are not *contrary* to the experience of mankind.

What is it for a miracle to be contrary to our experience? It is to be present at the time and place at which a miraculous event is said to have happened, and to see and know that it did *not* happen. Suppose it should be reported all over the city to-morrow that during my lecture a man fell down dead; that the physicians examined the case, and pronounced him dead; and that I stepped forward, and took him by the hand, and, in the name of God, bid him rise; and that he was brought to life and rose. Such an alleged miracle would not be contrary to anybody's experience who was not present; but it would be contrary to *your* experience,

were you here, and saw that no such event happened. But it would be contrary to no man's experience on earth but yours; for none but yourselves were present to see and know that it was not so.

What is it, then, for miracles to be contrary to the experience of all men? It is that all men, of each generation, have been present at the time and place of every alleged miracle, and saw that it did not happen; a ubiquity of experience which belongs not to man, but to God.

The multitudes, then, who never saw a miracle, are no evidence against the credible testimony of those who declare that they did behold it, more than any negative testimony is evidence against positive testimony. In a crowd, a man knocks his neighbour down; I bring forward two men who saw the blow given; you bring forward, to contradict their testimony, one hundred men, who swear they did not see it. Both testimonies are true: the two men saw it; the hundred men did not see it, because they were not looking that way; but does their *not seeing* it prove that it did not happen? Do the slumbers of those who did not witness the shower of meteors some years since disprove the testimony of those who were awake and did see them? If this kind of logic were admitted, no fact could be proved beyond the limits of the senses. So that the famous argument of Hume comes to this—that no human testimony can prove to us the existence of any uncommon event which we did not see! Not a very formidable argument, one would think, against the miracles of the Bible! All human knowledge, concerning facts not derived from our own vision, is gathered from facts made known by testimony; and miracles are facts as capable of proof as any other facts.

OBJECTION 4.—It is incredible, it is said, that God

should so regard the interests of a creature so insignificant as man as to interpose by miracles on his behalf.

If man were an animal of mere instinct, it might be incredible that God should interpose on his behalf by miracles to bestow what his common providence has bestowed on every living thing. But man is not an animal of instinct, but a social, intelligent, free, accountable, and immortal mind—the noblest work of God; comprehending, through an endless duration, an amount of enjoyment greater than all possible animal creations.

Why, then, should he not regard with superlative interest a race of such capacities in ruin, and, in his infinite benevolence, provide, if possible, a way to restore, at any sacrifice, multitudes which no man can number? In what other way could he who rejoices over one wandering mind restored more than over ninety and nine who had never wandered, gratify his own benevolence, and amplify the exceeding riches of his goodness, and brightness of his glory, and send through the universe such a tide of joy?

OBJECTION 5.—But, it is demanded, how do we know that the miracles of the Bible ever happened? The miracles of Moses are said to have taken place some four thousand years ago; and those of Christ and his apostles nearly two thousand years ago. Suppose miracles to be good evidence of a revelation, how do we know, now, that they ever took place?

This is a proper inquiry, and ought to be met. It has nothing captious, or illogical, or ridiculous in it. We ought to ask and we ought to know how miracles are proved. We did not see the parting of the Red Sea, nor hear the thunders of Sinai, nor taste the manna; yet we are called on to believe that such things happened. Why should we be expected to believe them?

I answer, Because they are such events as could not have been believed to exist had they not been realities; and yet they have been believed to be realities by a nation from its commencement until now, and incorporated into their history, traditions, songs, and worship, through all time. They are so notorious that, if they had existed, they could not but be known; and if they had not existed, the nation could not have been made to believe that they *did.* The plagues of Egypt took hold of the laws of nature at all points. The waters of the land were turned into blood, frogs covered and filled every dwelling, flies swarmed upon them, and vermin covered man and beast; and locusts, in clouds, darkened the air, and devoured the fields; boils tormented the people, and murrain slew the cattle of the land, while darkness visible covered it; and thunder, fire, and hail beat down the harvests, and slew man and beast in the open field; and at length, in one night, all the first-born of Egypt died; while, all the time, in the land of Goshen, there was no annoyance, and all the laws of nature held on their propitious course.

All these were notorious and national events, and, if they did take place, were miracles. There was no necromancy or equivocation about them. The magicians themselves acknowledged the finger of God in them. Observe, also, that the institutions of this nation were based upon a belief of the reality of these miracles, as events which a nation of three millions witnessed. They were also officially certified to coming generations by written institutional testimonials, confirmed by an unbroken tradition, and public memorials constantly occurring in their worship; and Moses appeals to them as his authority from God to legislate and govern the nation, and enforces his authority by an appeal to them.

Now, I admit that miracles depending upon individual human testimony—private miracles, like those of Mahomet, or the modern Catholic miracles—amount to nothing, depending solely upon the credulity of the human mind for their support. But when the foundation of national institutions, that have come down from age to age, is based on miracles wrought before the whole nation, miracles notorious and unquestionable, and believed in through all ages, we have a miracle in such national delusion if the historic events were not real.

The fact is not denied that the children of Israel *believed* that their fathers were in bondage in Egypt—that they were delivered, by means of miraculous plagues, from the power of Pharaoh—that they crossed the Red Sea untouched by the waters, whose recoil overwhelmed Pharaoh and his host—that they passed through the desert, and were miraculously fed with manna, and with water from the rock—and that, after remaining there forty years, they were finally conducted to the Land of Promise. This has been the universal belief of the whole nation, from the first moment of its existence to the present hour. Look at it. If they did not see these miracles, their existence is settled; for, if they did not take place, when did they begin to *believe* that they had seen them? Not at the time, if they did not happen—if they did not take place, they all knew they did not; and at no time afterwards could they be made to believe that they had seen what they did not see.

When Moses told them of these events, if they really did *not* happen, why did they not tell him that it was all false? How could that nation be made to believe them, when they all knew from the beginning that no such events had existed?

But the peculiar nature of their *institutions* is such that

no man in his senses would have admitted them unless founded on the authority of miracles.

Nature contained no stated laws for multiplying the product of land every sixth year, to supply the harvests which were intermitted by letting the land rest every seventh year; and the acquiescence of a nation in such an ordinance must have been founded upon the promise of God corroborated by miracle. There are many other peculiar institutions which Moses never could have imposed upon the Jews had they not believed them to be sanctioned by divine authority, upon the evidence of miracles. They were a turbulent people, and took nothing upon the mere authority of Moses; and even when his authority was sustained by miracles which they did not question, they often made insurrection against him.

They did, then, believe in the miraculous events recorded in their history; and there is no nation that has a written history so early, and traditions so entirely in accordance with it, and without any other and contrary history.

When, then, I demand, did this belief begin, if it did not begin with the nation and its institutions? Every day that you depart from the alleged time of these miracles you augment the impossibility of their being believed; but let two or three centuries roll away, and you cannot make a nation believe such facts. A new and false history of a nation cannot be palmed upon it. There never has been such an instance. It would itself be a violation of the established laws of mind. Every nation has its history and its traditions, and you cannot find an instance of the real history of a nation being supplanted by a false one. If it could be done, all the histories in the world might be reversed. The Jewish nation in all time have believed that these miracles happened. Suppose they did not happen; suppose they never saw the plagues of Egypt,

nor passed the Red Sea dry-shod, nor stood beneath the thunders of Sinai, nor lived on manna, nor wore the same garments forty years, &c. When did they begin to believe these facts? Not at the time they are alleged to have happened; and every day and month made it more impossible to make them believe that they had seen from the beginning what every soul knew they had not seen. Miraculous events, I repeat, are incorporated into their traditions, history, institutions, songs, and worship; and the further you go from the beginning the more impossible the fraud becomes of innovating upon the tradition, history, and the senses of a nation. The Jewish history can no more be reversed than all the rivers of the world.

To illustrate this, take our own history. We have a history of the persecution and bondage of our forefathers in England, and that God prepared an escape for them, and bore them, as on eagles' wings, across the deep, where they endured hardships of mind and body for the sake of enjoying freedom. We have a history of the French wars, and English wars, and Indian wars. We have a history of the Revolution, of Washington, and of the final achievement of our independence and formation of our constitution. Suppose an attempt should be made to reverse all this, and to palm upon us another origin and history: that our ancestors dwelt about the Lake of the Woods; that they were oppressed by a mighty nation; that they were delivered by miracles; wandered for forty years on the northern shores of Lake Superior, Erie, and Ontario, and finally crossed the St. Lawrence dry-shod, and set up a monarchy under which we all lived, till the people, oppressed by their king, made an insurrection, and, by the help of one Washington, established a republic: could anybody be made to believe such

a tale in the ever-fresh, unbroken recollection of our own history? Yet you could as easily palm this on us now as a false history on the Jews at any time.

And the same argument sustains the Christian miracles. They were believed, from the beginning, by thousands who saw them, who could not have been deceived, and could not have received the institutions of Christianity at any subsequent time if they had not seen the miracles.

OBJECTION 6.—But it is said (and this is the last objection we shall notice) that all nations pretend to have their miracles, and that one is just as credible as the other.

This is not true, nor sustained by one atom of proof. It is a mere assertion, against known facts. No other nation or religion pretends to the existence of any *such miracles* as those upon which the Mosaic or Christian dispensation rests. There are nations who *claim* to have had miracles, but the proof of them comes down on single testimony. They were not wrought openly, in the presence of multitudes—they rest upon the assertion of single individuals. There are no such miracles in kind or notoriety at the origin of any other nation, which are wrought by universal consent into its history, philosophy, science, music, laws. institutions, customs, and worship; witnessed by the whole nation, and perpetuated by tradition and a written history from its origin. No other nation claims to have such and so many miracles as that we are forced to the alternative that they must have happened, or a greater miracle must be accounted for in their *being believed.*

It is said that the magicians of Egypt wrought miracles, but the tricks of these jugglers are not worthy of notice; they were not as many or as expertly performed as those of Signor Blitz. The magicians acknowledged their inability to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh, and confessed that what they had done were the dexterities of art. They

could not stand before the miracles of Moses. Pharaoh, supposing Moses to be only a great magician, called upon his own magicians to enter the lists, and they produced a little blood and a few serpents, which might easily be done; but Moses turned all the rivers of the land into blood, and their serpents were swallowed by the serpent rod. But when it came to them to produce lice, they declared they could not do it, they had no instruments for such work, and ceased from all further attempts, saying, "This is the finger of God."

So with the witch of Endor. She is said to have raised Samuel. But she was an impostor, and intended to deceive Saul; and she was as much terrified as Saul was when God brought up Samuel, and cried out in astonishment. It was God that raised Samuel up, to utter his own predictions. But as for the woman, she was the last who thought to see him, and was exceedingly terrified at his appearance.

So in the case of Job. The miracles which tried Job God wrought, and not Satan. This is one of the strongest cases that has been brought. The question was, whether Job was a man of integrity. Satan questioned it, and God permitted the trial to be made. The argument of Satan was, that Job was selfish—that he found his interest in religion, and therefore he was religious. But did Satan work the miracles? No; Job testified, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away." And after the trial was completed of this holy man, God said to Satan, "He holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him to destroy him without a cause."

Other miracles are said to have been wrought in modern times by Mahomet and the Catholic Church; but these are private miracles, and are always sustained by *ex parte* testimony. Mahomet *said* that he had wrought miracles,

and that they had been wrought for him; that he went to the moon and to the heaven of the blessed, &c.; but nobody saw these things. They were not apparent to the senses of the multitude, like the miracles of the Bible; and there are no other such miracles in history, and none on which the civil and religious institutions of nations are founded.

I omitted, in my past lectures, to say that in discussing these subjects the door was open for inquiry. If there be any question which anyone present would like to propose, it will be attended to; and if there be any question sent to me in writing for the next meeting, it shall be attended to. I have urged this subject on your attention, on the supposition that it is a proper subject for discussion. God forbid that discussion on so important a subject should be precluded, or that any should be called on to fall in with any views of religion without inquiry. A full and free inquiry should be made, if made at all, and in a spirit of truth, and candour, and seriousness; for this is a subject in regard to which a great responsibility rests upon us. It becomes us to approach these interesting inquiries in a spirit of humility. First, because they are the highest that the mind can reason upon; and, secondly, because they deeply affect our most vital interests. The anatomist, when dissecting for the information of his pupils, cuts boldly, because he knows that if he makes a mistake there is no harm done; the body is dead. But if he be operating on a living subject, he must take care where he draws his knife, lest he touch a vital part.

In reasoning upon the Bible, we are not compelled to believe without evidence. There are many to whom, for want of information, that evidence is not clear. They ought not to be wantonly accused of bad motives. If a man doubts, he is not to be sneered at and brow-beaten, and

cast out of society, because he does not believe. There may be men so rude and reckless in their opposition to religion as to incur the just displeasure of all thinking men. But it is not with such men that we ought to class him who honestly doubts, but is willing to be candid, willing to weigh the evidence, willing to be convinced, and to avow his conviction if he should find the evidence on the side of Christianity. To such I speak, if such there be in this assembly. Do not be afraid or unwilling that the Bible should be true. The judge who sits upon the property of men is bound to be honest. He is bound to keep both ears open that he may hear both sides; and a judge that should keep but one ear open, and refuse to hear the other side, would be impeached. But it is just as bad to sit in judgment upon our own interest and refuse to hear both sides. All that is needed is a candid discussion; and may God help the right!

LECTURE X.

THE PROOF OF THE REALITY OF MIRACLES.

THE subject of the present lecture will be found in the following note, which I received after the preceding invitation :—

Cincinnati, Feb. 20, 1838.

REV. DR. BEECHER—

Dear Sir,—You have several times expressed a readiness to answer any objection that may be made against the Christian religion, or against anything that you may urge in its defence. The object of this note is not to make objections, but to ask information; and I hope you will be as ready to give the latter as to answer the former.

In your last lecture you assumed the position that miracles were satisfactory credentials of a message from Heaven. This is true; and if the miraculous accounts in the New Testament are true, Jesus Christ is the Son of God: but what evidence have we that the New Testament is an authentic history of the life of Christ? If you can show that any one of the Gospels was written *shortly* after the events related in it are said to have transpired, that it was received as a true history by the Christians of the *city of Jerusalem,* and that it was probably open to the inspection of those interested to suppress the religion in its infancy, the proof, to my mind, of the truth of Christianity will be conclusive.

It is related in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that, on the day of Pentecost, the power of speaking various languages, with which they were before unacquainted, was conferred upon the twelve apostles. If it be true that such power was conferred, the fact, I think, must be susceptible of proof.

If you can show, then, from ancient history, ecclesiastical or civil, that *any* of the twelve apostles (except Paul) planted the Christian religion, soon after the death of its founder, among people speaking languages not spoken in Judea, I will have no difficulty in receiving as true all the miraculous accounts in the New Testament. I except Paul, because all that is said of him in the " Acts," as well as his recorded speeches and his

writings which have come down to us, shows him to have been a man of no ordinary talents, and of liberal education; and he might POSSIBLY have acquired in the ordinary way, before he became a Christian minister, a knowledge of the language of the people among whom he preached. But this could hardly have been the case with the Galilean fishermen.

If, therefore, you can show that Andrew, or Alpheus, or Thomas, or any of the original twelve, who are acknowledged by all to have been illiterate men, did so preach among people of a strange tongue, and establish Churches among them, you will satisfy me.

Yours, with respect and esteem,
A JOURNEYMAN MECHANIC.

I have nothing to object to this request, and statement of the case. It is very lucid, very candid, and very just; and it gives me great pleasure to answer doubts proposed in this manner, and brought to this test; and the more so that I feel a happy persuasion that the person who penned this note, and others who have doubts in the same way, will be satisfied. But the event must decide whether it will be so or not.

This note calls our attention to two points:

I. Were the Gospels written shortly after the events they record, so that the living generation might know the truth or falsehood of the alleged facts?

II. Was the gift of tongues, said to have been communicated on the day of Pentecost, employed by the Galilean fishermen in preaching the Gospel, and planting Churches among other nations of other tongues?

These are the two questions for our consideration; and before answering them directly, I will premise two things.

1. That Jesus Christ was the founder of the Christian religion. This few have denied, until recently it has been discovered that to admit the fact is to prove the inspiration of the Gospel. Since this, some feeble attempts have been made to mystify the subject and create doubt as to the existence of Christ. The whole opposition to Christianity, for ages, never denied the fact; and there have been no

denials of it, that I know of, till within the last two centuries, and chiefly within the last fifty years. But that a fictitious author of a revolution which pervaded Judea, and extended throughout the Roman empire, and overthrew the religious opinions of the civilised world, should be regarded universally, for ages, as the real author, would of itself be the most stupendous of all miracles. Such a revolution never yet was ascribed to a false origin, a fictitious hero. It would be to belie the senses of a whole nation, of the whole Roman empire, and overturn all the laws of human belief, and annihilate the credibility of all testimony. It is past all controversy that Christianity began to exist at the time it claims. It certainly did exist, and did supplant Judaism and Paganism; and in less than three hundred years predominated in the Roman empire, and also in a great part of the uncivilised world.

Certainly it had a beginning; and to suppose that the reputed authors of its establishment did not preach the Gospel and perform the miracles related by them is to suppose the senses of men, and the laws of evidence, and the motives of action, to have changed, at that time, in the whole civilised world, in a period of its highest intellectual power and scientific and literary attainments.

We may as well assume that all the rivers in creation have no source, and have flowed for ages from nothing, as that a revolution in religion, Jewish and Pagan, which has changed the face of the world and modified its history for two thousand years, flowed not from its reputed, but some unknown author. As well may we deny the existence of Cyrus, or Alexander, or Alfred, or Cromwell, or Luther, or Washington, as of Jesus Christ.

2. Christian testimony is credible testimony; that is, the testimony of the founders of Christianity is the testimony of credible witnesses.

The marvellous events whose existence they narrate are facts cognisable by the senses—facts of great notoriety—unusual, and separated from all other facts within human experience; they are of superlative interest, importance, and notoriety, above any ordinary facts of history. If they did take place as narrated in the Gospels, the testimony of the apostles and primitive Christians is as good as, and, I think better than, that which authenticates any other credible history. And yet it seems to be assumed by infidels that the founders of Christianity, being interested witnesses, are not credible witnesses. But their testimony is as valid as that which sustains any history. It is a universal principle of common-sense and law that any competent witness is to be presumed to testify the truth, until something is brought to repair the credibility of his testimony. The apostles and primitive Christians were competent to judge of facts, and to record them, and were at least as honest as men of other nations and religions, and were no more likely to testify unfairly, in their own favour, than the writers of other nations and religions, and as such we shall quote their testimony; and though it does not need proof, yet we shall prove our proof, if we do not misunderstand the force of evidence.

The history of the apostles contains no internal evidence against its truth. It was received as true, and has been from the beginning. No history of facts, differing materially from the evangelical history, has ever been put forth by friend or foe. Its truth is therefore to be assumed, until evidence is brought to impeach it.

In the providence of God, two facts are made to stand out most significantly in connexion with the origin of the Christian religion.

The Hebrew language of the Old Testament, in which

the great body of the predictions respecting the coming of Christ are contained, ceased to be used as the common language of the Jews during the Babylonish captivity, nearly six hundred years before Christ. After the Babylonish captivity, the Jews spoke a different dialect—not the pure Hebrew, but Chaldaic and Hebrew mingled; and they never spoke the pure Hebrew again. This it is that marks the age in which the prophecies were written. Then it was that God stereotyped his prophecies in a language that ceased from that time to be a living, spoken language; that it might never be said that the prophecies were forged to suit the history of events after they occurred.

Another providence in the same manner marked the era of the written and spoken language of the New Testament. About the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and before the end of the first century, the language of the Jews ceased to be spoken and written in Judæa, in consequence of their dispersion, and another language became the spoken and written language of the country. The Gospels were written in Hebraistic Greek, only used by the Jews of the first century. The Gospels, therefore, if forged, must have been forged during the lifetime of the apostles, and the whole generation of cotemporaries of the alleged facts; but it is impossible that at that time, when the whole matter was within the knowledge of all, a false history, so striking as this, should have been palmed on the nation and the world. It was during the lifetime of the apostles that this language ceased to be a spoken and written language; and within that time no forgery could possibly have been practised with success.

It is, then, to recapitulate, fair to assume that the history of the apostles is as good evidence of *facts* as the history of Mahomet, or the history of Greece and Rome, or of the discovery and colonisation of America. No in-

stance has ever been found of a false history of a nation or a religion being received as true from a period contemporaneous with the events it narrates, or immediately subsequent.

But is there any evidence that the Gospels were written shortly after the events they commemorate?

Answer: The evidence is indubitable, from sources already indicated.

(1.) The language in which the Gospels were written ceased to be a living language during the first century of the Christian era, probably from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. They were written in Hebraistic Greek, spoken only by the Jews of the first century, and must have been forged, if forged at all, during that time; but during that time it would be impossible for anyone to palm upon the Church a totally false history, and for the whole Church, cotemporary with the apostles, to be made to forget their true history so fresh before them, and receive a false one. As readily might they have been made to believe that the sun had always risen in the west, and that all the rivers had run up hill, or that the harvest had ripened in winter. It would have been just as easy to deceive their senses in the one instance as in the other. You suppose a miracle to get rid of a miracle. To make the subject more plain, What would have been the fate of a man who should have published a spurious history of the American Revolution in the lifetime of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, or of the generation which succeeded them? Let anyone try the experiment. He may scatter his books into every city. No one will believe him. Congress knows, the whole nation knows the facts. Nobody could have published a false history of those times and have been believed. It is just so with the Christian histories. Could anybody, in the lifetime of

the apostles, and of the generation cotemporaneous with or succeeding them, have induced anybody to believe a history of their age in which there was not only no truth, but a collection of the wildest fictions? Most assuredly not; and at any time since it would have been extremely difficult to palm such a history upon men.

It is a signal fact, in respect to the Old Testament, that it was embalmed in a language dead anterior to the fulfilment of its most important predictions, and that the same should be true of the New Testament. But—

(2.) We possess memorials of the Gospel history in extracts from the early writers, which go back to the Churches of apostolic origin. These extracts show the Christian writings to have been in existence by quotations from them. The quotations appear first about the time of the apostles—certainly before all of them were dead, and, from being few in number at first, go down increasing like a river by auxiliary streams, till they are multiplied in commentaries, and pervade all treatises and ecclesiastical writings.

In the Epistle of Barnabas, written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, the following remarkable quotation from Matthew occurs: "Let us beware lest it come upon us, *as it is written*, 'There are many called, but few chosen.'" Again, the quotations, "Give unto everyone that asketh," "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."* The passage, "*There are many called, but few chosen*," is contained in Matthew, and in no other book in the world; and the manner in which it is quoted, namely, "it is written," is exactly the manner in which the Jews quoted from the Old Testament; and Barnabas, being a Jew, applied the same phraseology to a book of the New Testament, thereby quoting and recognising it as an inspired book, and entitled to the same confidence which a Jew gave to the Old Testament.

Clement, who had seen and conversed with the apostles, wrote an epistle, in which the following passage occurs: "Especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, which he spake, teaching gentleness and long-suffering; for thus he said: 'Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven unto you; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; as you give, so shall it be given unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye show kindness, so shall kindness be shown unto you; with what measure ye mete, the same shall it be measured to you.' By this command, and by these rules, let us establish ourselves, that we may always walk obediently to his holy words."

Observe that these quotations are quoted evidently from *memory*, but contain the sense exactly, and the words almost *verbatim*. It is the way in which all the fathers were accustomed to quote.

He says again: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus; for he said, 'Woe to that man by whom offences come; it were better for him that he had not been born than that he should offend one of my elect; it were better for him that a mill-stone were tied about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones.'"

In the "Shepherd" of Hermas, ascribed to Hermas the cotemporary of Paul, and certainly of high antiquity, are such expressions as these: "He that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery;" and speaking of Christ, he says of him, "Having received all power from his Father." The fragment from which these quotations are extracted is a very short one.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, where men were first called "Christians," about thirty-seven years after Christ, and who, of course, must have seen and conversed with most

of the apostles, wrote several epistles, containing evident allusions to the Gospels. He says, "Christ was baptised of John *that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him.*" "*Be ye wise as serpents* in all things, and *harmless as a dove.*" "The Spirit knows *whence it comes and whither it goes.*"

Polycarp had been taught by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ. In an epistle, he has the following: "If, therefore, we pray the Lord that *he will forgive us, we ought also to forgive.*" "Beseeching the all-seeing God *not to lead us into temptation.*" "Remembering what the Lord said, teaching: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.'" From the Acts of the Apostles, "Whom God hath raised, having loosed the pains of death."

Papias, a hearer of John, and cotemporary with Polycarp, who had heard the apostles, in a work quoted by Eusebius ascribes to Matthew and Mark the Gospels which bear their names. About twenty years after the preceding writers, Justin Martyr wrote. His allusions to Christ would almost form a history of his life, and all but two are contained in our present Gospels.

The following quotations are allusions to particular passages: "Depart from me into outer darkness, which the Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels." "I give unto you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon venomous beasts, and upon all the power of the enemy." "And, before he was crucified, he said, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified and rise again the next day.'" He says of Matthew and John, "As they have taught who have written the

history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we believe them." He calls them "memoirs composed by the apostles and their companions."

Hegesippus, a Christian writer thirty years later, relates that, travelling from Palestine to Rome, he visited many bishops; and that, "in every succession and in every city, the same doctrine is taught which the law and the prophets and the Lord teach." This shows that the Gospels, one or more, were in the hands of the Churches as of equal authority with the law and the prophets. He employs the usual phrase, "the law and the prophets," for the Old Testament, and the "teaching of the Lord," for the New.

In a letter from Lyons, whose Bishop, Pothinus, was ninety years old (A.D. 170), and whose early life must have reached back to the apostles or their immediate cotemporaries, is this passage: "Thus was fulfilled that which was spoken by the Lord; that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Irenæus succeeded to Pothinus as Bishop of Lyons—a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. He was little more than a century from the publication of the Gospels, and was instructed by one who had conversed with the apostles. His testimony is as follows:—

"We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the Gospel has been brought to us. Which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be, for time to come, the pillar and ground of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the apostles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the

earth, declaring to men the blessings of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the Gospel of God. Matthew, then, among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a Church there; and after their exit, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him (Paul). Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord who leaned upon his breast, likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia."

Clement of Alexandria, who lived sixteen years after Irenæus, alludes to the Gospels. But I omit to quote more extracts, having presented you with sufficient for the argument.

From this time till the era of commentaries the stream of quotations swells more full, as time and transcription multiplied copies. But they are all quoted from the Evangelists, or the Acts of the Apostles; and quoted as inspired writings. When the books were scarce, the quotations were few; but, as they multiplied, the stream flows on, widening and deepening in the rich instructions of God's word, in other writings than those of the Evangelists, till it pervades the Christian literature of the whole civilised world.

Nothing but the truth of the facts narrated in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles can account for the fact that neither Jews or Pagans should ever have contradicted those facts, and that the mouth of the whole world, for eighteen centuries, should have been closed as to any denial of their truth. The Jews admitted the miracles, but ascribed them to the agency of the devil.

To illustrate the force of the argument derived from

the fact that the books were quoted from the earliest times as inspired and true, suppose that, fifty years hence, some monarchist should contend that the Declaration of Independence was a *forgery;* but, on examining fourth-of-July orations, and sermons and speeches of the day and afterwards, we found extracts from it, back to the very day of its publication; would we say that no such declaration had been published? Were the Congress imposed upon, and all that generation, and all that followed down to us, in supposing the document genuine, and quoting it as such?

Suppose the constitution of the United States should be declared a forgery; but in the records of Congress and courts we found extracts from it, up to the era of its adoption, and references to it in speeches, and in all the histories that have been since written; could its legitimate adoption be questioned in the face of such evidence?

In respect to the testimony of the founders of Christianity, there is no cotemporaneous contradiction, nor scrap of history different from what they narrate. This would be *impossible*, if the history of the Evangelists and the Acts and the Epistles were not notoriously true; for no cause ever encountered a more furious and stedfast opposition. Instead of conflicting histories, all the scraps and incidental notices of Christianity, by Jewish or heathen writers, are coincident with, and corroborative of, the evangelical history.

Josephus, a Jewish writer about sixty years after Christ, recognises the existence and outlines of the history of John the Baptist, and his tragical end by the order of Herod; and the following account of Christ is in every copy of his history extant: "At that time lived Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man, for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as

received the truth with pleasure; he drew over to him many Jews and Gentiles. This was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the instigation of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the cross, they who before had conceived an affection for him did not cease to adhere to him; for, on the third day, he appeared to them alive again—the divine prophets having foretold these, and many wonderful things concerning him; and the sect of the Christians, so called from him, subsists to this time."

Tacitus, seventy years after Christ, describes the sufferings inflicted on *Christians* at Rome. "The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator, Pontius Pilate." This is the testimony of Tacitus, an established Roman historian.

Such is an outline of the nature of the historical evidence of Christianity, though but a very small part has been quoted of what is accessible. It is impossible to give the whole in the compass of a lecture.

The following is the outline of what Paley, in his "Evidences of Christianity," has given. If anyone of you is desirous to read it at large, he may refer to the book, and read it all with great profit. The outline of his argument is contained in the following propositions, found in chapter ix., under the heading, "There is satisfactory evidence that many persons professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief in the truth of these accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct."

"The method," he says, "which I propose to myself is, first, to place before the reader, in one view, the propositions which comprise the several heads of our testimony,

and afterwards to repeat the same propositions in so many distinct sections, with the necessary authorities subjoined to each. The following, then, are the allegations upon the subject, which are capable of being established by proof:—

"1. That the historical books of the New Testament, meaning thereby the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted, or alluded to, by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were cotemporary with the apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding, in close and regular succession, from their time to the present.

"2. That when they are quoted or alluded to, they are quoted or alluded to with peculiar respect, as books *sui generis*, as possessing an authority which belonged to no other books, and as conclusive in all questions and controversies among Christians.

"3. That they were, in very early times, collected into a distinct volume.

"4. That they were distinguished by appropriate names and titles of respect.

"5. That they were publicly read and expounded in the religious assemblies of the early Christians.

"6. That commentaries were written upon them, harmonies formed out of them, different copies carefully collated, and versions of them made into different languages.

"7. That they were received by Christians of different sects, by many heretics as well as Catholics, and usually appealed to by both sides in the controversies which arose in those days.

"8. That the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of John, and the first of Peter, were received, without doubt, by those who doubted concerning the other books which are included in our present canon.

"9. That the Gospels were attacked by the early adversaries of Christianity as books containing the accounts upon which the religion was founded.

"10. That formal catalogues of authentic Scriptures were published, in all which our present sacred histories were included.

"11. That these propositions cannot be affirmed of any other books claiming to be books of Scripture, by which I mean those books which are commonly called Apocryphal books of the New Testament."

Of all these propositions he gives you the proofs, ample, as I judge, to sustain them. Any person who feels an interest to pursue this subject further will find these propositions sustained by quotations and facts in Paley's "Evidences of Christianity."

II. It now only remains to inquire, Can it be shown, from ancient history, ecclesiastical or civil, that any of the twelve apostles besides Paul were employed in planting the Christian religion, soon after the death of its founder, among a people speaking languages not spoken in the land of Judea?

It is no more candid than just to admit the validity of the testimony of the founders of Christianity and of early Christian records. We have shown that they are stereotyped immutably in a language which ceased to be spoken during the first century, which proves that the histories must have been written in the days of the apostles, or of their cotemporaries, and are only to be confuted infallibly by universal consciousness, if they were not all true; for the transactions claimed were not done in a corner, but pervaded Judea, and shook the Roman empire. We have produced extracts, also, from these sacred books, from the time of the apostles, augmenting like a flood, till the Roman empire was covered with the knowledge of the

Scriptures as the waters cover the sea. We, therefore, quote the documents as unimpeached and unquestioned authority. WE HAVE PROVED OUR PROOFS ; and it belongs to those who reject their testimony to disprove their truth by other evidence than assertions or doubts.

1. We find Peter, a Galilean fisherman, preaching to the Gentiles in Cesarea—to Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band ; and when called to account for preaching to the *Gentiles* by the Church of Jerusalem, he stated that he had seen a vision in his sleep, and heard the voice of God speaking to him, and commanding him to introduce to the Gentiles the knowledge of life, and the immunities of the Christian Church; and he asks, "What was I that I should withstand God?" Now, the inference is that the multitudes of these Gentiles whom he converted to Christianity were men of other languages from his own, though the evidence is not so unequivocal as other passages I shall introduce.

Two of the chief of the brethren in the Church at Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, are sent from Jerusalem to the Church at Antioch (a Gentile city), composed of Gentile converts, speaking the Greek and Syriac languages, to adjust a difficulty about circumcision ; and we find, about the same time, that Peter is at Antioch, publicly discussing with Paul the same subject. What was Peter there for? He was not acquainted with the language of Antioch, yet he was listened to by many who were unacquainted with the language of Judea. Again, it is probable that he gathered a Church ; *certainly* he preached to the Church at Babylon. In his first epistle, he says, "The Church which is at Babylon saluteth you." Here the Chaldaic language was spoken. Had Peter, that fisherman, learned the *Chaldaic* language? Again, it is testified by Eusebius that he preached at Rome, where

the Latin language was spoken, and confounded Simon Magus, who had fled from his rebuke in Asia to Rome. He quotes Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, as saying that the seed of the Gospel had been planted by Peter and Paul at Corinth and at Rome: "For both of these, having planted us at Corinth, likewise instructed us; and having likewise taught in Italy, they suffered martyrdom about the same time." At Corinth the Greek language only was spoken. The same writer, Eusebius, says that Peter appears to have preached through Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia. Thomas, he says, according to tradition, received Parthia as his allotted region; and in reading the memoirs of Buchanan, who visited Asia, we find that he discovered evidence of the existence of a Christian Church, called the Church of St. Thomas; so that we have, even to this day, evidence of a sect of Christians in Asia bearing the name of that apostle. Andrew received Scythia; and John, Asia; where, after continuing some time, he died at Ephesus.

In all these countries languages foreign to the Galilean apostles were spoken, and such as they began to speak in the day of Pentecost, and such as they doubtless went out speaking, to "preach the Gospel to every creature," as their commission required them to do. That John spent his time and died in Asia is the uncontradicted testimony of all historians. Philip preached in Phrygia. Polycrates, Bishop of the Church of Ephesus, A.D. 190, is quoted by Eusebius as saying, "For in Asia two mighty luminaries have fallen asleep: Philip, one of the twelve, who sleeps at Hierapolis; moreover, John, who rested on the bosom of our Lord, he also rests at Ephesus." This is the testimony of history about one hundred and fifty years after Christ, and about one hundred years nearer to the apostles than we are to the landing and

history of the Pilgrims in New England, and the commencement of our institutions.

Pontarcus, a Christian philosopher and Evangelist, who travelled from Egypt through Arabia to India, found there on his arrival some who were acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, to whom Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached.

Eusebius, from whom we collect this testimony, wrote in the reign and under the patronage of the Roman Emperor Constantine, about three hundred years after Christ.

We have more documents relating to our history probably than Eusebius had; but still, if we had nothing more than he had, and the traditions of three hundred years, any man of talents, and research, and honesty could make out the bones of American history. Eusebius gathered all that was known in the Roman empire from documents and tradition. He wrote under the patronage of Constantine, and had access to all the lights which the empire through all its provinces, both near and distant, could furnish; and his is therefore a credible history. It is the first regular history of the Church extant, and probably the first ever written. He quotes his authorities; some of which exist, and others are since lost. But he lived at a time when, both by tradition and by written documents, historical truth was accessible.

We now come to the question whether the Christian religion was authenticated by miracles, as its founders and disciples allege; and we have arrived at evidence that they did rest their claims on miracles, before the Jewish nation and the Roman empire; and that in three hundred years, against all possible resistance of civil and ecclesiastical power, through ten bloody persecutions, they succeeded in supplanting the Jewish and Pagan religions, and in the establishment of Christianity.

Could this have been done if the miracles recorded were not true, and were known to be false by every man of the generation to whom Christianity was *first* preached? To bring the case home, could a young man of mean parentage and obscure life, and without a common school education, rise up at this day and supplant both the Protestant and Catholic religion of North and South America? Could he gather round him twelve men more ignorant than himself, and in three hundred years revolutionise to his own nearly all the religions of the world? Suppose his disciples *should* believe his miracles *against their senses*, could a nation, a world, be made to believe them had they not been wrought? Is it possible that such a young man could so far impose upon the world as to oust the Protestant religion of North America, and the Catholic religion of South America, and the Pagan religions of the world, without actually convincing the generation around him by the evidences of their senses that he wrought miracles? Would it not in itself be the greatest of all miracles if the two religions should pass away, and his own pervade the whole continent in two or three hundred years? No miracle could be greater than this. The minds of men act as uniformly, according to the laws of the senses and of evidence, as the material world pursues its course according to the laws of matter; and for such a youth of thirty-three to do such a thing would prove either that he wrought the miracles, or that God helped him to accomplish it by changing the laws of human belief. If he succeeded without miracles, that is a miracle; but suppose he claimed the power of working miracles, and appealed to them in evidence, and did convince the world, would it not be an overpowering evidence to after-ages that his miracles were real? The effect would be the testimony of the first and second generations of the whole continent to the reality of his miraculous attestations.

So Christianity stands. Christ rested on his miracles: "If ye will not believe me for my words, believe me for my works' sake." If you do not believe my doctrines, believe my miracles. You believe Moses for his miracles; I produce the same proof. What was the fact? The apostles believed the miracles. The Jews admitted them, and endeavoured to account for them by Satan. From age to age no one, whether friend or foe, thought of denying or questioning the facts, till modern Infidelity, within a very few years, has seen what would be proved if they were admitted, and has again undertaken to deny them.

And now, my friends, as the argument would be dry to make it longer out of so many quotations, I have given you but a few specimens, to show the *kind* of argument which the *external* evidence of Christianity affords. The Gospel was preached to cotemporaries, and rested its claim to belief, not alone on the intrinsic excellence of its doctrines, but on miracles performed by its founder. These miracles were believed by all. They could not have been believed so universally if they had not been real. This is as certain, from the laws of the human mind, as cause and effect in matter. The religions of the day were changed by the instrumentality of a poor man, and twelve poor disciples. The *fact* cannot be denied. This could not have been done without a miracle, and this is Heaven's attestation. This is our ground of belief that we do not follow cunningly-devised fables. It is not a mistaken credulity to believe that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, that through him the world might be saved. Here are the Gospels quoted by historians and fathers of the Church, back to the day of their origin, and down to the present time. There is no place where forgery could have been committed.

And I rest my soul upon the truth of the statement;

and, my friends, will you not do it? Can we safely reject such evidence? I ask this simple question, *Is it safe* to reject it? The tide of evidence is irresistible. Ought we not to take the side of safety—the side of evidence? We ought to know that Christianity is *certainly not* true before we reject this accumulated evidence; but in the presence of such evidence we are not permitted to doubt, to disbelieve. We are all sinners; we know it—we feel it. We are a part of a creation which groans and travails in pain, waiting for the manifestation of God's mercy. We have glorious evidence that God, in his word, has provided the means of cultivating our minds and hearts for a more glorious destiny than reason and the light of nature could achieve. And let it not be our condemnation that light came into the world, and that we loved darkness rather than light, because our deeds were evil.

LECTURE XI.

OBJECTIONS TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

In our preceding lectures we have given an epitomised view of some of the evidences of the inspiration of the Bible. In the present lecture I propose to state and answer some of the present objections which have been made to its inspiration, derived from its contents. Some of them have been suggested by letters, and some of them by books and conversation.

The answering of objections is a work not less important than the statement of the argument. The evil is not that we lack evidence of the truth of the Bible, but that objections are brought before the minds of those who know not how to answer them, which break the force of evidence, and leave them in an unsettled state of mind. They are poisoned arrows, which inflict venom with the stroke—which rankle in the bosom of the inexperienced youth without a remedy.

The objections against the contents of the Bible may be classed under the following heads—

I. To the language of the Bible.

II. To its morality.

III. To the recorded conduct of pious men.

IV. To things needless or trivial, or which could be known without a revelation.

I. The language of the Bible, especially in the legislation of Moses, is said to be indelicate.

The answer is: The language objected to might be so,

if it were not *necessary;* but, being necessary, we deny that it is indelicate. No language is indelicate if the exigencies of society require it as a matter of utility. On this ground, anatomical lectures, medical publications for professional uses, instead of being censured, are justified by the most refined society. Suppose that anatomical and pathological facts should, for purposes of utility, be inserted in our legislation, as they were in that of Moses, would our statute-book be regarded as indelicate? In the case of Moses, the necessity of minute and delicate legislation was prominent: three millions of people were to be elevated from the debasement of a protracted bondage. They had lived in an idolatrous nation, and were to be raised to intellectual power and moral purity, as the depositories of religion and liberty; but, to do this, it was necessary to interpose minute directory, prohibitory, and sumptuary regulations, to contravene by penal enactments various habits and practices, idolatrous or personal, which could not otherwise be repressed.

Another object of the legislation and language excepted to was the promotion of cleanliness and health. Physical impurity was as incidental to their past condition as moral. The system of ablutions, therefore, while it typified the removal of moral defilement, had an immediate reference to health and habits of cleanliness. Three millions of people were to be conducted through a wilderness, and to dwell forty years in a dense encampment of tents; and nothing in such a case but legislation or a miracle could save them from destruction by disease. But God never works miracles where his purposes can be reached by ordinary causes. He therefore directed Moses to enact, even to minuteness, whatever laws might be necessary to guide and preserve a people in their circumstances.

This complex minuteness of the Mosaic code was in-

tended not only to prohibit crimes, which, of course, must be named, but also to separate the nation at all points from heathenism by rendering the systems repellent to each other. The object of God was to keep up these repellencies, to prevent the Jews from engaging in idolatrous worship, or mingling idolatrous practices with their own. The efficacy of this arrangement is attested in the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people to the present day. No system of civil and moral law ever wrought with such enduring effect as the laws of Moses upon the Jewish nation. Though it has ceased to act upon them as a nation for two thousand years, the Jew is, to the present hour, in most of the essentials of character, what the Mosaic code has made him. There exists no other nation, in the same circumstances of dispersion and persecution for thousands of years, that has maintained the same uniformity as is stamped upon the Jewish people by this code.

Its tendency among the Jews was not to licentiousness, nor is it now. Under the Mosaic code the nation rose in forty years, in respect to purity, transcendently above their condition in Egypt, and equally above any cotemporary nation on the globe; and even to this day, through all their dispersions and vexations, the tax of female abandonment has fallen with less severity upon them than upon other nations. They give fewer victims through the brothel to Moloch than any other nation; and it is their alleged "indelicate Bible" that has saved them.

It is a fact also quite notorious, that those portions of our community which are not the most remarkable for delicacy or purity are the most embittered against the Bible; a fact not to be accounted for if its tendencies were to licentiousness. Why do they not provide the

Bible in places of licentiousness as a text-book of impurity, and place it under their pillow as the quietus of a guilty conscience? No one has ever made such a mistake, or ever will. The licentious know and feel that the Bible is the most terrible book the world has ever seen to persons of dissolute habits.

And no ancient nation whose religion and laws were licentious ever maintained such permanence and purity, and intellectual and moral power, as the Jewish nation have maintained. Through all time they have been among the most intelligent, sagacious business-men. A chief occasion of their civil disabilities has been for the protection of nations against their shrewdness and enterprise. They were afraid to admit them to a fair competition in trade; and when, in the face of all these difficulties, they amassed wealth, they withdrew the protection of law, and plundered them; and yet, amid all these difficulties, they have made themselves the depositories of wealth, and the financiers of the world, have brought kings to their feet, and swayed the destiny of empires. During the Bonapartean wars, the Rothschilds held the balance of power, and gave or withheld, at their pleasure, the sinews of war; and, for the last fifty years, Jews had been among the most learned and efficient members of various cabinets of Europe.

II.—The morality of the Bible is said to be defective.

1. One instance has been suggested to me by letter. It respects the punishment of the young prophet, seduced by an old prophet to disobey the order God had given him. (1 Kings 13.) Now it is said that since he had the authority of a prophet for what he did, it was hard that he should be punished for what he supposed God had allowed him to do.

But how does the case stand? The young prophet

knew that God had charged him to eat no bread and drink no water in the place to which he sent him, and not to return by the way that he came. And what was his authority for supposing that God had reversed these directions? The word of a stranger, who claimed to be a prophet, without any evidence of the fact but his own word; who did not himself profess to speak by inspiration, but said that an angel told him that he (the angel) was inspired by the Lord to direct him (the old prophet) to bring the young prophet back, without any evidence but his own word that the hearsay story was true. It was, therefore, the naked word of a stranger, allowed to set aside the express known direction of Heaven. When human laws are enacted and published, no parole testimony can justify their disregard; and when God speaks, and his prophet knows it, he must abide the consequences if he confides in the hearsay testimony of uninspired man to set aside the authority of God. He was punished, therefore, as Adam and Eve were, for disregarding the authority of God on false testimony. He knew who sent him; he did not know that God had inspired an angel to tell the old prophet to turn him back.

2. Again: the demand of Moses that Pharaoh should let the people go three days' journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifice to God is supposed to imply duplicity; as if, under a false pretence, he intended to effect their escape by stealth.

But the imputation suggested is not sustained by the text. It was the will of God to commence the conflict by making the demand small at first, letting it move on from one demand to another, till complete. Moses did not say to Pharaoh, *This is all we ask.* It is manifest that he asked a part only, first, of the whole to be insisted on in the progress of the conflict. By this he did not waive

his intention to claim the whole. I see no duplicity in this. Certainly there was no temptation for any. If it be intended to implicate God, the answer that exonerates Moses from duplicity equally exonerates him.

3. It is objected that the direction to the Israelites to *borrow* of the Egyptians, when about to leave the land not expecting to return, was an act of fraud.

Remember that this direction came from God. Still, it is not the less objectionable if wrong. We must meet the objection, and vindicate the character of the God of the Bible; but the whole objection is made by the translation. The original word, in its common use, does not mean *to borrow—i. e.,* to ask and receive under a pledge of repayment—but simply *to ask for;* and this appears to be its meaning here. The Israelites had been enslaved and defrauded for many generations of their just wages; and, on leaving the land, they were directed by Heaven to ask or demand of the Egyptians such aid as their exigencies required; and it was granted with as much alacrity as it was asked.

4. The command of God to let the people go, and his hardening the heart of Pharaoh so as to prevent his compliance, has been the occasion of great objection, and has caused perplexity even to believers.

But to all such objectors it may be said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures."

If God hardened Pharaoh's heart by direct omnipotence, he would be the author of sin, and would punish for the non-performance of what he himself had made impossible. This would have been an objection which could not be answered. We would not try to answer it. If he had commanded obedience, and then cancelled the evidence of his authority, and thrown the mind of Pharaoh into doubt and vacillation—if he had urged his claims by motives in

words which he cancelled in deeds—if in any way he had tempted Pharaoh to obduracy, by giving him reason to think it safe or proper to disobey, we should be no advocates of such a course. It could not be justified.

But what is hardness of heart? and how did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Hardness of heart consists in great voluntary obstinacy in refusing to obey God. If God hardened his heart only by reasonable demands which he refused; by the exhibition of evidence which he disregarded; by the presentation of motives which he resisted; and by granting respites which he perverted to augmented obstinacy, then did he harden his heart in no sense unworthy of his benevolence and wisdom, or which afforded to the obstinate king a cloak for his sin; in no way but in the regular administration of his perfect government. It accords with the nature of mind and free agency, that obligations violated shall harden the heart—that evidence slighted shall harden the heart—that mercies abused shall harden the heart—and that judgments despised shall harden the heart; and there is upon record no evidence that God in any other way hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is not said that he did it by a secret omnipotence; on the contrary, the antecedents of his obstinacy were the repetition of demands, of evidence, of motive, of forbearance, and discipline, followed by augmented incorrigibleness. It is certain that God did nothing direct and irresistible in its consequences to bring out that hardness. The positive cause was Pharaoh's pride and obduracy of disposition, which scorned to yield, and which punishment only tended to make more unyielding, and to work up to a more rebellious spirit, gathering from calamity itself a momentum of determination to resist God, till he saw that resistance was vain.

If I endeavour to dissuade my neighbour from intem-

perance by the proper motives, evidence and persuasion, and in gaining a victory over my arguments he hardens his heart still more than if I had said nothing, I have not done improperly, though I have been the occasion of hardening his heart. If a parent attempts by discipline and remonstrance to reclaim a wayward son, and if all his endeavours fail, those very endeavours only producing the effect of making that son overleap boundaries which he would not have overleaped, and commit crimes he would not have committed, but for the parent's correction—if the parent has thus hardened the heart of his child, and called out a giant power of determined opposition which did not show itself before—is the sin at the door of the parent or the son? The parent hardens his heart, as God hardened Pharaoh's; and so do I when I preach the Gospel to you and you disobey it—for if it does not soften, it hardens your heart. "It is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." But do I therefore do an improper thing? Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel faithfully, day after day, though under my unavailing preaching greater hardness of heart settles down upon you!

God, then, hardened Pharaoh's heart in no sense inconsistent with his benevolence, and wisdom, and perfect government. According to the language of the Bible, he is said to do what he permits, or does not prevent; and in this sense only is it said that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and never that he hardens the heart by the direct exertion of his power, having for its object the augmentation of human obstinacy and wickedness. On the contrary, he brings the precepts and motives of his government to bear upon the sinner with great power, wisdom, and good will; and he, by resisting and disregarding them, hardens his own heart. If this were wrong, it

would be wrong for God to govern a world in mercy which does not obey him; for, inevitably, his goodness abused would harden the heart of every subject.

There is nothing in the case of Pharaoh but its prominence different from the principles and results of the divine administration in its effects on us all, every day. Universally, the repetition of neglected admonition hardens our hearts; the perversion of mercies, and the disregard of judgments, harden our hearts; just as this course on God's part, and the same conduct on the part of Pharaoh, hardened his heart. It is according to the course of nature in the moral world, as really as that fire should burn, or poison destroy, in the natural. God must stop his remedial system, or else harden the heart of those who obey not. He must stop commanding, stop intreating, stop his mercies, stop his judgments, stop the strivings of the Spirit, or harden the heart of the disobedient. He must annihilate them, or harden their hearts; for were he to cut them off from earth and send them to hell, obligation and evidence would follow them there, and disobedience for ever harden their heart. It is at our option whether the providence of God shall bless or harden our hearts.

This view of the subject corresponds with the universal representation of the Bible. In the case of Pharaoh it is said that God hardened his heart, as he afforded light and enforced obligation; and it is said also that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, as he resisted the obligations and motives of the divine government. Thus Isaiah is said to have hardened the Jews, by urging upon them repentance and reformation, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear. It was in the same manner that the same nation filled up the measure of their sins in the time of our Saviour; and the sin against the Holy

Ghost seems to be such a malicious, wilful resistance of evidence and motive as God by his renewing grace will never overcome. The ground whose end it is to be burned is that which, under the best cultivation, produces thorns only and briers.

5. Again, the order given by God to exterminate the Canaanites is supposed to be inconsistent with his benevolence. But who is it that has constituted the laws of nature by which eight hundred millions are swept from the earth every thirty years? And why is it? If the inhabitants of earth were loyal would death thus reign? Is it not the result of insurrection against God? And is it not just to restrain the madness of a rebel world? And has he not a right to punish incorrigible nations, and by such instrumentalities as his wisdom deems most appropriate? Will the Almighty, in the day of judgment, apprised of his unbenevolent severity, apologise to the victims of the Flood, and to Egypt, and Nineveh, and Babylon, and Tyre, and Jerusalem, and to the Man of Sin, for his exterminating judgments? What would be the result should God abdicate the throne and permit nations to violate with impunity the constitution of their nature and the laws of his government, but anarchy, the most intolerable condition of social being, which, by its lawless violence, would with a more intolerable vengeance cut off the generations of men? It was of the Lord's mercies that the Canaanites were not exterminated long before; but if the punishment of nations be just and necessary, has not the God of heaven a right to select his own executioners? Or is it more unbenevolent for God to appoint men to apply the penal sanctions than for human governments to do the same? Suppose the sheriff should refuse to execute the laws upon robbers and murderers; would his clemency be approved while the rights of life and property are continually set at naught?

God, then, selected one nation to exterminate other nations for the violation of the natural and moral laws of his government. He might have chosen earthquake, fire, or pestilence. But he chose other agents; and they, with miraculous evidence of his aid, fulfilled their vocation. These nations, like the world before the Flood, had outlived the end for which society is formed, had trodden under foot all the laws and baffled all the motives of the divine government, till extermination became the only remedy; for so tenacious is God of his moral government by laws and motives, that when nations go beyond the pale of moral restraint God will not interpose his omnipotence to save them: extermination is then at once the penalty and the remedy. Thus, the early race of man was exterminated by the Flood, the cities of the plain by fire, and the Jewish nation were driven from their land by the sword, and the voluptuous Roman empire supplanted and renovated by hardy barbarians; and thus were the nations of Canaan exterminated. This is the great law of providence. Crimes that supersede the moral government of God are to nations unpardonable sins.

But, besides these purposes of punishment, the territory was needed for the establishment and defence of God's government of mercy on earth by rearing a republic—the world's first and last hope. The worship of God was fast failing, and the night of an everlasting idolatry was settling down upon the world, forming the horrid union of priestcraft and despotism, dooming the earth to eternal chains and darkness. It is certain that darkness would have descended upon the world with idolatry and despotism, whose iron sceptre has always gone together with chains, and lust, and blood. It was to stop this dark stream of pollution that a fountain was opened to pour down through distant ages light and life till all the nations

should be purified and blessed. It was to stop the progress of a power that was crushing the mind and heart of the world, and tending rapidly to its perpetual bondage; and to plant a city of light and liberty, whose walls should be salvation, and whose citadel should stand against the armies of darkness, till the light of the world and the desire of nations should come. And here, far back in time, the foundation was laid of all the liberty, civil and religious, that has since blessed the world. Was the war of our independence inconsistent with benevolence? But had not the Lord exterminated the Canaanites, and set up the light-house of coming ages, we had never seen the light nor felt the power by which Christ makes nations free. We should have had no battles of liberty to fight, and no independence to enjoy; and the first ray of civil liberty for our world would have been like that of the star whose distant light has not as yet reached the earth. If God had not fortified his religion against idolatry by right judgments, and true laws, and a high protecting providence, the whole earth from that day to this had been in chains. The conflicts with the Canaanites were the battles of the Lord for the world's liberty—THE THERMOPYLÆ OF THE EARTH! The god of idolatry was drawing his dark veil over the world, when God came in, and planted and defended a nation chosen to transmit religion and liberty to distant generations. This blest inheritance, through his tender mercy, has come down to us from our Puritan fathers; and we have no cause to wear sackcloth and keep fast-days for the sins of the Jews, nor for th sins of our fathers in fighting the battles of the Revolution; and let not those who justify the latter condemn the former.

III. Another objection is found in the sins of pious men, placed on record in the Bible; as the sin of Abraham in the practice of deception through fear.

But to understand the subject, it must be considered that they are recorded as historical facts, and recorded as sins, according to the whole morality of the Bible, and are never eulogised as virtues, or so recorded as to be mistaken for examples for imitation, but rather for our warning. I can perceive, therefore, no respect in which the inspiration of the Bible should be implicated, unless it should be—

1. That the inspired historian does not always stop, when he makes the record, to say that it is a sin; or—

2. That such sins as are recorded are inconsistent with piety, and yet are found in those whom the Bible recognises as righteous.

As to the first, that they do not always stop to reprobate the sins of good men which they record, I answer that they had no need to do so. The sins alluded to are *notoriously* such, according to the Bible. The historian might as well stop to inform us that theft and murder are high crimes, or the philosopher lecturing upon the sun take a candle to show us his dark spots, as the historian of the Bible, amid its overpowering light, stop to point out the dark spots in Christian character. There was no need of animadversion. Was not the crucifixion of Christ a crime? And yet the four Evangelists simply relate it, without note or comment; and, wonderful to tell! their touching history of the persecutions, sufferings, and agonies of their Master is recorded by his bosom disciples just as the most frigid and impartial historian would have written it, without denouncing it as a crime, and without comment in the language of grief and indignation. There was no need of interjections on the subject. The simple, truthful narrative of meekness and affection is more sublimely powerful than all possible amplifications of language could make it.

3. In respect to the sins of good men recognised in the

Bible being inconsistent with piety, it must be remembered that the Scriptures do not claim that Christian character is wholly exempt from sinful defect. The teaching of the Bible is that all men are by nature without holiness; have turned their hearts away from God and set their affections on things below; that in regeneration the chief end of man is changed from the love of the creature supremely to the supreme love of God. But the Scriptures do not teach that the moment a sinner is converted his heart is brought into *perfect* accordance with the law of God, and continues so, without a single transgression, to the day of his death. Christian love is permanent and supreme; so that no Christian ever becomes for a moment an enemy to God, and totally depraved. But the Scriptures do not teach, nor does experience evince, that there is in the regenerate no sinful deficiency in this love, and no alloy of selfishness, and worldliness, and pride, and ambition, and constant liabilities to temptation and sin. Religion, in the beginning, does not extirpate entirely any one sinful passion or affection which belongs to our common depraved nature. It impairs the power of everyone, and relatively gains strength in every conflict and victory. A new empire is set up in the soul, but it is in the presence of a long-established and vigorous opposition. To sin a deadly wound is given; but it is given to a giant in whom a fearful vitality yet remains, and who terrifies the victor with frequently-renewed and powerful onsets. Religion has conquered; but it holds its dominion over captives impatient of subjection, and ready every moment to mutiny and throw off the yoke. Of course, religion, in moments of temptation and insurrectionary violence, does not prevent the commission of actual sin, and sometimes, though not often, of flagrant sin; habitual sin it does prevent. No known, palpable immorality can be per-

sisted in without extinguishing the evidence of Christian character; and yet the history of Abraham, and David, and Peter admonishes us that men of unquestioned piety may be overcome by temptation. If angels, and our great ancestor, Adam, might fall from a state of perfect rectitude, what is the imperfect Christian that he should be thought incapable of being overcome? And yet how often do we hear the argument against experimental religion urged upon principles which imply that, if a man is a Christian, he must be sinless! "Is not such a thing wrong?" Yes. "Well, then, how can such a one be a Christian?" Because Christianity is the commencement and not the consummation of spiritual life—the first beatings of which are feeble, and powerfully counteracted by all the antecedent tendencies of sin and power of habit. The Church is not a palace, where none but the perfect associate, but a conservatory association, in which the first movements of holiness are cherished and strengthened up to the confirmed and perfect health of heaven. But shall the skill of the great Physician be questioned, and the efficacy of his prescriptions and the progress of his patients be denied, because all the way to heaven symptoms of disease hang about them? Is the man who has been sick not convalescent until his health is perfectly restored? Is not the subject of suspended respiration rescued until all the debility and every injurious effect of drowning have disappeared?

If the doctrine of regeneration were that men on becoming Christians became perfect, the world might well indulge the most inveterate incredulity; but to insist upon it that no new affections have begun to operate in the heart so long as the evidence of relative imperfection remains, is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural and contrary to fact.

It is not inconsistent, then, with the inspiration of the Bible, for men who have become Christians to have defects. God has decided that no man is sufficient for his own preservation. Holiness is not a self-sustaining principle. Our sufficiency is in Christ; by the grace of God we are what we are. God has not promised that he will preserve the regenerate from all sin; but he has promised that sin shall not have habitually dominion over them; that the righteous shall hold on his way; tha though the good man fall he shall not be utterly forsaken, because the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

It must be observed, however, that the actual and prominent sins of good men are not habitual or permanent traits of character. No liar, or drunkard, or murderer, can inherit the kingdom of God. No habitual liar is anywhere recognised as a good man in the Bible, and no drunkard. It is recorded of Noah that once he was inebriated; but his sons were evidently surprised at it as an uncommon event, and a great sin and shame, and, with filial delicacy, they walked backwards and threw a garment over him. The sin of David was not habitual; he himself deplored it most bitterly, was punished for it most fearfully, and, with a broken heart, repented of it all his days. The sin of Peter was not habitual; it was the result of sudden and powerful temptation upon an excitable and precipitant temperament, and, as soon it was committed, was followed by bitter tears of godly sorrow. Even human laws distinguish between sudden killing under strong provocation, and deliberate, premeditated murder.

Other objections, equally specious and efficacious upon the popular mind, might be adduced and answered, but the time will not permit. None of them, however, are better founded than these, and they do not justify doubt concern-

ing the inspiration of the Bible. My wonder is, that a book written at different periods through the long lapse of so many centuries should be so uniform in doctrine, so pure in its morality, and the characters of its good men so excellent, and itself open to so few exceptions. The difficulty is not that there is not evidence enough to sustain the claims of inspiration, but that there is too much, and spread over too great a surface to be read and appreciated by many. Men engaged in the avocations of life have not time to travel through volumes, and, being unacquainted with argument and fact, are not prepared to encounter the shallow arguments of infidelity. My aim has been to select a few of the fundamental evidences of divine inspiration, and to show that the argument is logical, and the evidence conclusive, and that it goes to rivet on reflecting minds the proof that the Bible is a book of divine origin—Heaven's gift to man, to guide his footsteps till the day-dawn and the day-spring from on high visit him; that it is not merely the iron-bound volume of duty, and restraint, and punishment, but the friend of man for time and for eternity—the friend of liberty, of science, of industry, of the people, and especially of the labouring-classes and the poor. It is the world's friend, the light of the world and the life of the world; God's wisdom and benevolence condensed in the smallest possible competent popular form, exerting the most benign intellectual and moral influence upon the human mind. No other book ever exerted so powerful an influence in dispelling popular ignorance, in alleviating the pressure of despotism, and the debasement of idolatry. No book so embraces the cottage and the throne, and all between—so illumines the whole world, so invigorates the intellect of man, and so exalts and ennobles our race. It contains a comparatively perfect model of republican government belonging to distant ages,

and has been, and now is, and will be, the only hope of the world's elevation to universal civilisation, and universal civil and religious liberty.

I am happy to know that the preceding exhibition of the republican tendencies of the Bible has been satisfactory beyond my expectation; for multitudes have slept over or misunderstood the elementary wisdom and benevolence of the Old Testament. The book has been slandered, misunderstood, ridiculed, abused and neglected, while the evidences of its origin and sublime contents have been unknown. I have endeavoured to bring you, as patriots and republicans and Christians, on to the side of the Bible—to show you that it is the people's book, the working-man's book, the poor man's book, able, if cordially received and obeyed, to fulfil all the purposes of God's comprehensive benevolence in the elevation of our race. God grant that these views may come home to your judgments, may fasten upon your consciences, and bring savingly the influences of the Biole upon your hearts! And when all men shall thus receive the Bible, then will the world be happy, and one blessed republic of benevolence and brotherhood unite the nations of the earth, and the earth itself be restored to the glorious fellowship of the universe of holy minds.

LECTURE XII.

PROPHECY.

We have considered in previous lectures the nature and reality of miracles, as authenticating a revelation from God. It is said, however, that miracles, though admitted to be satisfactory to those who witnessed them, are no evidence to us who did not see them; for how do we know they ever took place? But I have shown that the existence of a nation of peculiar and unparalleled institutions, co-existing with the miracles, and confessedly founded on their reality, is evidence of their existence. We have seen that, if the miracles were not real, those peculiar and forbidding institutions could not be founded on them. The miracles and institutions also come down cotemporaneously from the beginning; a miracle itself if they were not real. The same is true of the Christian institutions. The era is settled. They assume to be based on miracles wrought before the eyes of those who died asserting the doctrines of the Gospel, and who spent their lives in the support of its institutions.

The evidence of the senses, it is admitted, is more impressive than any proof of a fact not seen. What is seen comes to the mind more easily than what is proved; but the well-established certainty of an event, when it is proved, does, in many cases, render the fact as certain to the mind, and create just as really an obligation to believe, as if it were a matter of vision. Who doubts the existence of the Revolutionary War, any more than if he himself

had mingled in the shock of battle? Is anyone the less certain of it? Not a whit. Yet he has not seen it. Who doubts that the Declaration of Independence was signed by those whose names it bears, at all more than if he had stood by and seen the names written? The *fact* that Jefferson, and Adams, and Hancock signed it with the others is in every respect as certain, and its results as obligatory on us, as if we had been actually eye-witnesses to the deed. So it is with the miracles of Moses; so with the miracles of Christ and the apostles. The fact is ascertained, then, that miracles were wrought in attestation of a commission to reveal the will of God to man. And in whatever way the *fact* is made certain to us, its evidence for the revelation is as real as though the miracle had taken place before our eyes; for it is its *existence* which includes the sanction of Heaven, and not the medium through which we are apprised of it. The obligation, therefore, in either case is alike imperative to receive the divinely-authenticated records.

It is admitted, however, that a wider field is open to cavil, and perplexity, and doubt, in respect to matters of evidence, than where we have the testimony of the senses.

It is to meet this waning of impression, and facility of evasion, that God has condescended to authenticate his revealed will by another kind of miracle, which travels down the stream of time, and grows in its impressiveness in proportion as the evidence of miracles wanes, and accumulates upon us its authentications with the lapse of ages. If the one, like a cone, converges with distance, the other, like the cone reversed, expands; and both, side by side, constitute a body of evidence of equal diameter through all time.

This new species of miracle is called prophecy, and consists in the miraculous and extensive foretelling of future

events, such, and so many, and so complex and various, that no finite mind could grasp the knowledge; as much beyond the powers of created mind as miracles indicate power beyond the capacity of finite beings. It is a miracle of knowledge in one case, just as truly as it is a miracle of *power* in the other. God brings omniscience to authenticate his word in one case, and omnipotence in the other. Omnipotence is stamped on miracles, omniscience on prophecies.

The point necessary to make out the authentication of prophecy as a miraculous event is the *fact*, that finite minds are no more omniscient than they are omnipotent, and that it surpasses the power of created minds to foretell an extended and complex series of far-distant future events. When, therefore, developments are made including omniscience, it proves the inspiration of the records *by prophecies*, as much as developments including omnipotence prove their inspiration by *miracles.*

The impossibility to created minds of extensive complex accurate predictions of persons and nations, amounting to biography and history, ages before their existence, has been universally conceded; and, if denied, may be conclusively shown. Consider the utter incompetency of any man to predict accurately his own history for a single day. Who knows, and which of us can predict, the events of to-morrow? Perhaps the existence of the working-man, whose days consist of a repetition of the same labours, like the movements of a clock, may be guessed at with tolerable accuracy; but where we go out into the tide of human affairs, and find our own free actions so interwoven with the actions of other minds and the unanticipated events of Providence, and so diversified in their choice and action by those unexpected turns of thought and conduct which occasion volition, no

man, however mechanical his life may be, can tell, in respect even to his own conduct, what a day may bring forth ; much less write his own history for a month or a year, and still less foretell what will be his character, life, and conversation, through a considerable number of years. Which of you can sit down to-day, and write his own history for the year 1852? Try it. Write out what you will do and say, where you will be, and what will be your condition and character for that year. You cannot do it. You cannot anticipate one-half the circumstances accurately. There is nothing more impenetrable than human history in advance of time, unless it be the counsels of Heaven, and the darkness around the throne of God. This fact is so well known that familiarity makes it forgotten. We do not think how very little we know even of our own personal history, ahead of the present moment. But put one hundred thousand of these *minds*, blind to the futurity of their own condition and occasions of action for a single day, together in a city. Ponder upon the complex action of that city, and write its history for a month or a year. Let one hundred thousand ignoramuses put their heads together to make out future knowledge with respect to the complex nature of the whole. Can they do it? They can do no such thing. The difficulty is multiplied by the aggregate of individual ignorance concerning a single day, blended into the far-reaching complex actions of a month or year. Throw, then, all the cities of a nation together—all these minds in so many thousand unseen and inexplicable modes acting and counteracting upon each other—and who can write the history of a nation? Throw the impulses of millions of such minds together, amid all the relations of commerce, agriculture, science, arts, and government, with the lusts, appetites, and prejudices of each one of the

mass, where constant changes of condition, circumstance, motive, and choice, are going on, multitudinous as the particles of water in the ocean, and where the minutest event may change with giant power the tide of events through eternity. Take these for your data, and write off your nation's history; sit down, with nothing but present appearances for your guide, and delineate the image and body of the times for ages to come. You might as well write the history of ten thousand bee-hives, all in swarms —"confusion worse confounded," "in wandering mazes lost." Finite knowledge can do no such thing. It is just as impossible as to create worlds or govern them.

The truth of these remarks is illustrated by the constant failure of mercantile hopes, from changes in the providence of God, unforeseen when their plans were wisely laid in the presence of existing circumstances. But a large class of merchants would make no failure, if the circumstances taken into view at the commencement of an enterprise were always realised. What is the matter? Why were not all the circumstances that could affect the success of the enterprise taken into view? Because the merchant had no telescope to look into the future—no telescope that could take into the range of its comprehensive vision all the circumstances in the depths of time to come. We cannot do it. Look at the stretch of mind and extent of information demanded in the financial concerns of nations, and almost of the whole world; and yet, with all this, behold the wreck of human hopes by changes and losses which none could foresee! In the midst of confidence, some occurrence, some circumstances as unforeseen as uncontrollable, dash the wisest plans. One reason why the celebrated Rothschilds have succeeded so generally is, that they have got so much of the business of nations into their hands that they can *make*

circumstances, and *compel* circumstances; otherwise they would be as weak as other men. The deep darkness which shrouds even the near and fast-coming results of the political history of nations attests the impotency of the greatest minds to lift the veil, and read connectedly the events of coming time. Pitt said that he had observed the plans constructed, and the predictions made, by wise men beforehand, with respect to political movements, *and never knew them to hit right*: and surely his own plans did as little answer his anticipations. He was a man of stupendous mind, learned in history and in politics, and he knew human nature well; but yet all his continental coalitions were blown up, and he died in despair, exclaiming, "O my country!" He did not know his country or the plans of Heaven; he felt as if his country were gone, because *his* plans of saving her had failed. Yet the gallant ship moved on, and his country has increased in power and prosperity since his death more than before.

But if we consider the affinities and reciprocal influences of the family of nations upon one another and upon the world's destiny, whose but the mind of the Eternal Omniscient can, ages before the events, place in a distinct and legible record portions of the history of the complex action of the mind of the world, each individual of which is free, and contributes to make out the complex result? No mind but the Creator's can solve what will be the future character and conduct of the eight hundred million minds of the world, all free agents, acting upon each other in ten thousand various ways, and constantly shifting their mutual relations, like the particles of water in the ocean, to make out the history of the world. Yet nearly the whole past and future history of the world is written in prophecy. It is in the Bible.

How came it there? I cannot verify this to-night by extracts, because I have not time for so extended an exemplification in a lecture; but the fact is so, and will be amply proved to him who will examine the proofs in "Newton on the Prophecies."

Whoever, then, professing to be commissioned by God to reveal his will to men, is enabled to record the character and history of illustrious persons, ages before they are born, and to record the great outlines of the history of nations, comprehending nearly the history of the world, ages before it came to pass, has the same divine attestation to his commission for coming ages as he who works miracles affords to the senses of existing generations. Cotemporary minds require miracles, and rest satisfied with the proof; but the same man records another kind of miracle, whose growing light in distant ages will compensate for the waning of the other. To foretell, then, future events is a miracle as really as to stop the sun, or control the elements, or raise the dead.

Another point essential to the evidence of prophecy is, that it was unquestionably written before the biographical or historical record claimed as its fulfilment.

There must be evidence that the predictions of the Bible which we rely on were made and recorded anterior to their historical fulfilment; and I would repeat here the two signal providential events already premised, respecting the prophecies of the Old and New Testament. Of the predictions that we especially rely on respecting the Christian dispensation, the written evidence is contained in the Old Testament; and it was so ordered, in the providence of God, that the language in which they are written ceased to be a living language about six hundred years before the events took place. They were stereotyped in a dead language about six hundred years before the Christian era;

and they remain, like the mummies of Egypt, embalmed for an imperishable testimony that the prophecies they contain were not written after the events. The wide gulf which lies between the *record* of these infallible prophecies and the time when they were fulfilled makes it impossible to deny the prediction or the fulfilment, and impossible for any but God to have foreseen the certainty of the events predicted.

Another point of importance is, that their fulfilment in history should contain not merely some *agreement* in a single or a few particulars which might be accidental, but a description of character, or national history, so full and various, and through such an extended period of time, as no accidental concurrence of circumstances can account for, any more than any complex design can be accounted for without a designer. A prospective history, through years, of an individual or a nation, can no more be the result of an undesigning, accidental concurrence of circumstances, than the creation of the world itself, so full of endless varieties of design, could come into being and beautiful order without a Supreme Designer. We have in the Old Testament a biography of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, it may be possible for anybody to say that a man will be born one thousand years hence, having this or that trait of character common to many men; but he cannot draw a character unique, original, peculiar, and which never existed on earth before, nor will again till he comes in flaming fire.

It would take volumes to illustrate all the predictions of the Bible and their fulfilment—nor is this my design. My only object in this lecture is to apprise you of the nature and sufficiency of the evidence of prophecy to authenticate a divine commission, accumulating with time as the evidence from miracles is impaired in its facilities

of exhibition and power of impression. My great object is to exhibit the *philosophy of prophecy as evidence of a divine revelation;* to set before you a few brief examples of this evidence, only as specimens, that the principle may be realised; and from that to refer you to the books of the Old and New Testament themselves for your minute examination, and to such commentators and writers as have expounded them.

I might notice the prediction that, while the land of the Jewish nation rested the seventh year, the sixth should produce double; and that, when thrice a-year all the males went up to Jerusalem and left their land defenceless, their enemies should not invade it. Compare these promises with the evidence of their history, that they were punished with famine only when they refused to suspend cultivation on the seventh year, and were vexed and invaded and carried captive only when they neglected their national convocations, and the support of God's worship. What lawgiver would dare to make such ordinances if he had not a just confidence in the power of God to make good his word? Suppose the Legislature of Ohio should prohibit planting and sowing one year in seven, and predict that the sixth year should produce double; how would it insult the common-sense of the people, and expose their own folly!

I might go on to state to you predictions concerning Ishmael and his posterity: that he should dwell in the midst of his brethren, and should be a wild man, his hand against every man's, and every man's hand against him. Read the well-authenticated history of the Arabians, his acknowledged descendants—there is no question on the point that he was their ancestor any more than that Abraham was the ancestor of the Jews; and as face answers to face in the water, so the character of the Arab answers

to the prediction. We cannot find a history that will not confirm, with overwhelming proof, the fulfilment of that distant and most graphic prophecy. It is fulfilled with wonderful exactness in every one of its predictions of their unique traits of character, and of their geography, and location, by every account that has ever been written of that singular people.

I might point also to the prophecy of Jacob concerning his sons, and their geographical location. By a careful inspection, it has been ascertained that Jacob must somehow have seen the chart of the relative portions of the land of Canaan as the maps now disclose them; and yet the tribes cast lots for the portions which they should respectively inhabit, and they came out exactly as he had predicted. Whose eye saw the chart, and held it up to the vision of Jacob, if it were not the eye of God?

The destruction of Babylon by Cyrus was predicted by Isaiah one hundred and sixty years before the event, and by Jeremiah fifty years before it. In these predictions the destroyer of Babylon was called by name, not the name by which he was then familiarly known, but the name by which he was afterwards called, as the instrument of God's indignation upon this guilty city. It was predicted that the besieging army should consist of various nations under Cyrus. This is as it happened. Read Rollin, or any ancient history, and you will find the prediction verified. (Compare Isa. xxi. 2—xiii. 4, 5; Jer. li. 27, 28, with Xenophon; Cyrop, B. v. c. iii. 38; B. vii. c. v. 15.) Again, the river was to be dried up, the gates left open, and the city taken by surprise during a night of revelry and drunkenness. The river Euphrates passed through Babylon. Cyrus let off the waters by canals in one night, and let his army in through the channel; the city was buried in intoxication, and was slaughtered. (Compare

Isaiah xliv. 27 ; Jer. l. 38—Jer. li. 36 ; Isa. xiv. 1 ; Jer. i. 39, 57 ; Isa. xxi. 45—Isa. xlvii. 11—Isa. xlvii. 9, with Herodotus i. 191.) It was predicted also that the place should be for ever uninhabited—a dwelling of wild beasts and a place of stagnant waters. And as this is so significant, and as I wish to give you a just conception of this prophecy as a specimen, I will read the predictions in full, and then the fulfilment. I read from Professor Stowe's "Lectures on the Bible," a work which I recommend to all who wish to enter upon the study of the Bible, as containing much miscellaneous information too little understood respecting the Old Testament.

Scripture Prophecy.—"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation ; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces." (Isa. xiii. 19—22.) "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions ; they shall yell as lions' whelps." (Jer. li. 37, 38.) "I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water ; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Isa. xiv. 23.)

History.—"The Persians destroyed a part of the city ; time and the negligence of the Macedonians destroyed a part." "It is now almost entirely deserted ; so that we may safely say of it what a certain poet said of Megalopo-

lis, the great city of Arcadia—'the great city is now a vast solitude.'" (Strabo, B. 16.) "Babylon, once the greatest of all cities which the sun ever looked upon, has now nothing left but the walls." (Pausanias, B. 8, c. 33.) "I have learned from a certain Elamite brother, who came from those parts, and now lives as a monk in Jerusalem, that the royal hunting-grounds are in Babylon, and that wild beasts of all kinds are kept within its walls." (Jerome, Com. in c. 13.) "I soon distinguished that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions, taking the air upon the heights of the pyramids. We then rode close up to the ruins, and I had once more the gratification of ascending the awful sides of the tower of Babel. In my progress I stopped several times to look at the broad prints of the feet of the lions left plain in the clayey soil; and by the track I saw that, if we had chosen to rouse such royal game, we need not go far to find their lair. But while thus actually contemplating these savage tenants wandering amidst the towers of Babylon, and bedding themselves within the deep cavities of her once-magnificent temple, I could not help reflecting how faithfully the various prophecies had been fulfilled." (Sir R. K. Porter.) "The tower is still to be seen, and is half a league in diameter; but is so ruinous and so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes." (Ranwolf.) "Not only a great part of this plain is little better than a swamp, but large deposits of water are left stagnant in the hollows between the ruins, again verifying the threat denounced against it." (Sir R. K. Porter.)

Strabo, whom I have quoted, is good authority for his-

torical facts. He is the first whose history I have read on the subject—the earliest, and nearest the time of the destruction of Babylon.

Sir Robert K. Porter, who visited them in 1820, is the most recent and accurate observer of the stupendous ruins of this ancient city, once the greatest city on earth—beyond the reach of fear, and able to scoff as she did at her enemies from the walls. I read in childhood that the place where Babylon stood was forgotten, and could not be found. It is not forgotten; there are mountains of rubbish there. In 1820 this European traveller, commissioned by the Russian Government to visit the ruins, brings out this testimony to the fulfilment of the predictions of Isaiah, which, written three thousand years ago, contain an accurate description of the present condition of the city.

I might add, in further illustration, the history in prediction of the rise and downfall of empires, connected with the history of the Church—the Assyrian, Medo-Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman; with the rise of Mahomet, and of the Papal ecclesiastical empire, of which predictions we read the exact fulfilment on the pages of the most authentic history. But this would carry me over too broad a field; it would require too many extracts from the Bible, and from history, travels, &c., for the compass of this lecture. I must select only two or three examples.

I will refer first to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the universal dispersion, and persecution, and preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, predicted in the Bible; and the fulfilment of these predictions, recorded by Josephus and other historians thousands of years afterwards.

The predictions are contained in Deuteronomy xxviii. 52—57, where the terrors of the siege are foretold "And

he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land which the Lord thy God hath given thee; and thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee; so that the man that is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave; so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates." It is even predicted that "the delicate woman shall eat her young in secret," during the famine and terrors of this awful siege. (Verses 56, 57.)

Such are the predicted terrors of the siege of Jerusalem. Now, let anyone read Josephus, describing the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Joseph was a Jewish historian, living and writing shortly after the event. He relates that the Romans besieged and took several fortified places before they took Jerusalem. "And forasmuch," says Josephus, "as wives squeezed the food out of the mouths of their husbands, and children out of the mouths of their parents, and, what was most miserable of all, mothers out of the mouths of their babes." (See Jewish Wars, Book 5, chap. 10, sec. 3, page 1245, Hudson's edition.) "Wherever in any house but the shadow of bread appeared, instantly a battle ensued, and they who had before been on the most friendly footing fought against each other with the greatest fury, that they might carry off some miserable scraps of their sustenance." (Book 6, chap. 3, sec. 3, page 1274.) In the same book we read of a noble woman, distinguished by her birth and wealth:

"The tyrants, indeed, had by this time plundered her of all her sustenance, &c. Afterwards, having dressed her child, she devoured one half of him, and, covering up the remainder, she secretly reserved him for another meal." (Book 6, chap. 3, sec. 4.) Again, Moses predicted great destruction of life. Josephus says, "But of them who perished by famine throughout the city there was an incalculable multitude." (Jewish Wars, Book 6, chap. 3, sec. 3, page 1274.) "And during the whole siege there perished eleven hundred thousand persons." (Chap. 9, sec. 3, page 1294.)

It was also predicted that they should be carried into Egypt and sold as slaves. "And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, 'Thou shalt see it no more again;' and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." (Deut. xxviii. 68.)

It appears from Josephus that when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, of the captives who were above seventeen years he sent many bound to the works in Egypt; those under seventeen were sold. But so little care was taken of these captives, that eleven thousand of them perished for want. The markets were quite overstocked with them; so that, Josephus says in another place, "they were sold with their wives and children at the lowest price, there being many to be sold, and but few purchasers." (Jewish Wars, Book 6, chap. 8, sec. 2, page 1288.) "Having chained the males that were above seventeen years of age, he sent them down to the works which were in Egypt; but such of them as were below that age he sold. While Phronton had charge of the captives, eleven thousand perished through want." (Book 6, chap. 9, sec. 2, page 1291.) Jerome says, "After the

last destruction, which was brought upon them by the Emperor Adrian, many thousands of the Jews were sold; and such of them as could find no purchasers were transported into Egypt. Of these last, many perished by shipwreck, or famine, or were cruelly massacred by the Egyptians." (Jerome on Zech. xi., page 1774, vol. 3, Benedictine edition.)

This is the testimony of history. But they were not only to be plucked off from their own land, but also to be dispersed into all nations. "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known—even wood and stone. And among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would to God it were even! and at the even thou shalt say, Would to God it were morning! for the fear of thy heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." (Deut. xxviii. 64—67.)

"And where is the nation," says Newton, "which is a stranger to them, or to which they are strangers? They swarm in many parts of the East, are spread over most of the countries of Europe and Africa, and there are several families of them in the West Indies. They circulate through all parts where trade and money circulate, and are, as I may say, the brokers of the whole world." There is no other fact like this. All history and all travellers record their dispersion and presence as a distinct people in all parts of the world—over Asia, Africa, Europe, and

America. It was predicted thousands of years ago; and the thing is placed before our eyes just as it was predicted.

"But," to pursue the prediction, "though they should be so dispersed, yet they should not be totally destroyed, but subsist as a distinct people, as Moses had before foretold." (Lev. xxvi. 44.) "And what a marvellous thing is it, that after so many wars, battles, sieges—after so many years of captivity, slavery, and misery, they are not *destroyed utterly;* and though scattered among all people, yet subsist as a distinct people by themselves! Where is there anything comparable to this to be found in all the histories of all the nations under the sun?" (Newton on Prophecies, vol. i., p. 97.) The fulfilment is before our eyes, and all generations are witnesses of the miracle. We did not see the miracles of old; but we read the prophecies, and behold their fulfilment before our eyes. We see the prophetic miracles as clearly as the Israelites saw the miracles of Moses.

It was predicted, also, that they should suffer much in their dispersion, and should not rest long in any place; "and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." And "they have been so far from finding rest that they have been banished from city to city, and from country to country. In many places they have been banished and recalled, and banished again. We will only just mention their great banishments in modern times, and from countries very well known. In the latter end of the thirteenth century they were banished from England by Edward I., and were not permitted to return until Cromwell's time. In the latter end of the fourteenth century they were banished from France (for the seventh time, says Mezeray) by Charles VI.; and ever since they have been only tolerated, not having enjoyed entire liberty, except at Metz, where they

have a synagogue. In the latter end of the fifteenth century they were banished from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella; and, according to Mariana, there were one hundred and seventy thousand persons who left the kingdom. Most of them paid dearly to John II. for a refuge in Portugal, but within a few years were expelled from thence also by his successor, Emanuel; and in our own time, within these few years, they were banished from Prague by the Queen of Bohemia." (Newton, i. 97.)

It was predicted also that they should be oppressed and spoiled evermore; and their houses and vineyards, their oxen and asses, should be taken from them, and that they should be sorely oppressed and crushed always, &c., &c. "And what frequent seizures have been made of their effects in almost all countries! How often have they been forced to redeem their lives with what is almost as dear as their lives—their treasure! Instances are innumerable. We will only cite a historian of our own, who says that Henry III. 'always polled the Jews at every low ebb of his fortunes. One Abraham, who was found delinquent, was forced to pay seven hundred marks for his redemption. Aaron, another Jew, protested that the king had taken from him, at times, thirty thousand marks of silver, besides two hundred marks of gold which he had presented to the queen; and in like manner he used many other of the Jews; and when they were banished, in the reign of Edward I., their estates were confiscated, and immense sums thereby accrued to the Crown." (Newton, i. 97, 98.)

It was predicted also that their sons and daughters should be given to another people (Deut. xxviii. 32). "And in several countries, and in Spain and Portugal particularly, their children have been taken from them, by the order of the Government, to be educated in the Popish

religion. The 4th Council of Toledo ordered that all their children should be taken from them for fear they should partake of their errors, and that they should be shut up in monasteries to be instructed in Christian truths. And when they were banished from Portugal, 'the king,' says Mariana, 'ordered all their children under fourteen years of age to be taken from them and to be baptised; a practice not at all justifiable,' adds the historian, 'because none ought to be forced to become Christians, nor children to be taken from their parents.'" (Newton, i. 98.)

It was predicted also that they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see (ver. 34). "And into what madness, fury, and desperation have they been pushed by the cruel usage, extortions, and oppressions which they have undergone! We will allege only two similar instances, one from ancient and one from modern history. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, some of the worst of the Jews took refuge in the castle of Masada, where, being closely pursued by the Romans, they, at the persuasion of Eleazar their leader, first murdered their wives and children, then ten men were chosen by lot to slay the rest. This being done, one of the ten was chosen by lot to kill the other nine, which having executed he set fire to the palace, and then stabbed himself. There were nine hundred and sixty who perished in this miserable manner; and only two women and five boys escaped by hiding themselves in the aqueducts under the ground. Such another instance we have in our English history; for in the reign of Richard I., when the people were in arms to make a general massacre of the Jews, fifteen hundred of them seized on the city of York to defend themselves, but, being besieged, they offered to capitulate, and to ransom their lives with money. The offer being refused, one of them cried out in despair that it was

better to die courageously for the law than to fall into the hands of the Christians. Everyone immediately took his knife, and stabbed his wife and children. The men afterwards retired into the king's palace, which they set on fire, in which they consumed themselves, with the palace and the furniture." (Newton, i. 98.)

It was also predicted they should serve other gods of wood and stone (ver. 36 and 64). "And is it not too common for the Jews, in Popish countries, to comply with the idolatrous worship of the Church of Rome, and bow down to stocks and stones rather than that their effects should be seized and confiscated? Here, again, we must cite the author who has most studied and has best written their modern history, and whom we have had occasion to quote several times in this discussion. 'The Spanish and Portuguese inquisition,' said he, 'reduce them to the dilemma of being either hypocrites or burnt. The number of these dissemblers is very considerable; and it ought not to be concluded that there are no Jews in Spain or Portugal because they are not known. They are so much the more dangerous, for not only being very numerous, but confounded with the ecclesiastics, and entering into all ecclesiastical dignities.' In another place he says, 'The most surprising thing is, that this religion spreadeth from generation to generation, and still subsists in the persons of dissemblers in a remote posterity. In vain the great lords of Spain make alliances, and change their names, and take ancient escutcheons; they are still known to be of Jewish race, and Jews themselves. The convents of monks and nuns are full of them. Most of the canons, inquisitors, and bishops, proceed from this nation.'" (Newton, i. 99, 100.)

Finally, their plagues should be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long-continuance (ver. 59). "And have

not their plagues continued now these seventeen hundred years? Their former captivities were very short in comparison; and Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied in the land of the Chaldeans; but *now* they have no true prophet to foretell an end of their calamities. They have also false Messiahs to delude them, and aggravate their misfortunes. In their former captivities they had the comfort of being conveyed to the same place: they dwelt together in the land of Goshen, they were carried together to Babylon; but now they are dispersed all over the face of the earth. What nation has suffered so much, yet endured so long? What nation has subsisted as a distinct people, in their own country, so long as those have done in their dispersion into all countries? And what a standing miracle is thus exhibited to the observation of the world!" (Newton, i. 100, 101.) On the above topics also see Deut. iv. 25—28; Amos ix. 9; Jeremiah iv. 10.

I will now give you a concise account of a very remarkable personage whose existence was predicted in Isaiah; and leave it to you to decide to whom that character belongs. Isaiah (chap. liii.) predicted the advent and history of a very illustrious individual, characterised by the following particulars:—

He should be a Jew, and grow up among his people.

His claims of being their Deliverer should be disbelieved.

Himself should be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Though he suffered for the nation, they regarded him as being punished justly as an impostor.

He suffered to make expiation for their sins, and restore them to the favour of God.

Amid insults and sufferings, he was meek and silent. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet he opened

not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Ver. 7.)

He was to be denied the ordinary testimony of his innocence. Lowth, in his exposition of this part of the Scripture, states that it was the custom among the Jews, that when a malefactor was taken to execution, he was preceded by a public crier, who proclaimed that such a man was guilty of such a crime, and such and such witnesses had given testimony against him, and that now, if any man knew of his innocence, he might testify. It is evident that this safeguard was denied to our Saviour. "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living." (Ver. 8.)

His sufferings are not to be for himself, but for the sins of his people; "for the transgressions of my people was he stricken." (Ver. 8.)

He was destined to be associated with the wicked in his death; but actually was associated with the rich, from an impression of the purity of his life. "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." (Ver. 9.)

The sufferings were to be providential afflictions. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief." (Ver. 10.)

His sufferings were to result in a numerous seed, &c. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." (Verses 10 and 11.)

Lastly, it is predicted that his cause, though despised, shall prosper, and amid conflicts and opposition he shall gain signal victories. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Ver. 12.)

Now, I pray you, of whom doth the prophet speak these things? This chapter the Jews used to regard as descriptive of their Messiah. But when Christ appeared, and the Jews had done unto him as prophesied, and this chapter was held up as a mirror to them, they attempted to deny that it was prophetic of the Messiah. And Celsus and Porphyry, violent opponents of Christianity, attempted to prove that this prophecy was a forgery, an interpolation, inserted in Isaiah after the events occurred to suit the purpose of the Christians; but they failed, or the attempt would have been its own exposure. It was absolutely impossible, in the face of a generation so familiar with the Old Testament, to have interpolated so remarkable a chapter as the 53rd of Isaiah in their Bible. Besides, three hundred years before that time it was stereotyped unchangeably in the Septuagint version, and there it remained till its fulfilment came to pass, and still remains.

And now, in respect to this argument, after an examination of the evidence, can you doubt that the predictions in the Bible were written before the destruction of Babylon, and the dispersion of the Jews; and that the predictions of the Messiah were given out long before they were consummated by the coming of Christ?

What shall we say to these things? Here are the predictions in the book, and there is the evidence of history

to their fulfilment, ages after they were written. The prediction could not, by any possibility, have been forged beforehand to suit the events. Nor could the coincidence of these events, so exact and circumstantial and numerous, have been the result of accident alone. Enough has been proved to show that we are not following cunningly-devised fables in taking such a book for our guide. There is no truth so true that objections will not be started against it. But the question is, has not God set his seal on the commissions of those who wrote the Bible, which have been handed down from age to age? Do not the instances referred to in the Old Testament, do not the prophecies in question, prove that the omniscient God has sanctioned this book? If they do, receive it. In order to do this it is not necessary to know everything about the Bible. A child can trace the plan which God has revealed, and we do not need that anything should be demonstrated in figures. All the problems in Euclid would not make it clearer. Take the *facts* as they are, and if the evidence is not conclusive, what *can* be proved? Divest your mind of prejudice, and, with prayer to Heaven, read; and as you move on the shadows will depart from your mind, the mists will clear away which now darken the subject. Be honest; go to the Bible itself, and study it with the prayer, Lord, let me know if this be thy word! Take all proper means to understand what you see there. Know the facts, that you may be able to judge for yourselves. And if any man will do his best to search the Scriptures in the spirit of truth, and to regulate his heart by them, and to bring into subjection those passions and prejudices which hinder him from acting according to the will of God, the Bible will quicken his progress; and it may be expected that God, by his Spirit, will bring his heart into accordance with the requirements of his word.

LECTURE XIII.

THE DECREES OF GOD.

No doctrine of the Bible has been so misconceived and misrepresented as the doctrine of the decrees of God.

The more common conception has been that God determined everything and every event in the universe which has been, or is, or will be, and brings them all to pass by his own irresistible omnipotence; that, in his own mind, he registered the universal chart of things, events, and actions, and spiked and riveted them down, and watches over them with unceasing omnipotence to prevent their change and secure their existence; that he is the author of sin, and all volitions and actions, good or bad; that he made a part of mankind on purpose to damn them, for the manifestation of his justice—punishing them for not doing what they could not do, and for doing what they could not help: and the question is, How can God be just, or man accountable?

In this view the doctrine is regarded with horror and hate as blasphemous. To others it is only another name for fatalism—a heathen doctrine baptised with a Christian name. A third class look upon the doctrine of decrees, and fore-ordination, and predestination—terms all meaning the same thing—with good-natured pity and contempt, as a matter of idle and endless speculation, upon which men and devils, if they please, may display their talents and perplex their minds, and "find no end in wandering mazes lost;" and, with oracular wisdom and magisterial confi-

dence, decide that the doctrines of predestination and accountability never have been and never will be reconciled. To others it seems a dark cloud, full charged with wrath and hate, from which reluctantly some few muttering drops of mercy fall, while punishment is the chief delight and employment of God—a conception filling their souls with forebodings and melancholy dread.

There are some, even pious minds, who believe that the doctrine of God's decrees would be seen to be true, could we see and understand it as God does, who yet admit that *apparently* it seems to be inconsistent with God's benevolence, and justice, and human accountability—a doctrine doubtless true, but profoundly mysterious—one of those "secret things" which belong to God, and which ministers and all others had better let alone, since they will only "darken counsel by words without knowledge."

All these views of God's decrees are misconceptions or misrepresentations, which, were they made with malignant heart against better knowledge, would be blasphemy.

Doubtless, the doctrine has sometimes been injudiciously stated, and denounced through misapprehension by holy men; and, for the same cause, by multitudes has been regarded as inexplicable and mysterious. But, as it is revealed in the Bible correctly interpreted, it is a doctrine not even apparently contradictory to reason or revelation: nor is it hopelessly inexplicable, or intelligible only to Christians; but may be so explained and proved that unrenewed men may see it to be true and right; so that God will be "justified when he speaks, and clear when he judges;" while to the Christian it may become the sun of his firmament—God's system for the development of his glory, and the light, and confidence, and joy of the loyal universe.

The only difficulty attending the exposition and com-

prehension of God's decrees is, that they are so vast, and multitudinous, and various that no single part can be understood but in its relation to the whole; as no one of the bones of the human body discloses the wisdom and benevolence of God, but in its place and in its relation to the entire structure.

But this, instead of precluding investigation, and affording a reason for letting the subject alone, makes its investigation and correct exposition the more necessary; that the truth, and whole truth, may be understood, and all mistaken and blasphemous theories excluded. For it is a subject on which the human mind *will* speculate, and, uninstructed, will speculate wrong. The heathen lay hold of it, and wrestle with it; and childhood is awake to it, and will ask questions which neither they nor we can answer, if we do not understand and explain the doctrine; and all the misrepresentations will be set down as our views of the doctrine.

In my attempt to elucidate the subject, I shall not involve myself or you in a labyrinth of theological controversy. Instead of this, I shall give you a concise definition of the decrees of God, comprehending all the elementary principles necessary to the exposition of the subject; which principles being explained, their own light will make the subject plain, and show the doctrine to be in accordance with the nature of mind, of free agency and accountability, and of a benevolent, wise, and just moral government, in accordance with the Bible and common-sense.

The following is the definition :—

THE DECREES OF GOD are *His determination to create a universe of free agents, to exist for ever under the perfect laws of his moral government, perfectly administered; for the gratification and manifestation of his benevolence, for*

the perfect enjoyment of all his obedient subjects; with all that is implied therein, and all the consequences, foreseen.

That there is a God self-existent, eternal, immutable, and infinite in wisdom, benevolence, and power, has, we cannot doubt, been proved.

That such a mind will do something, we suppose will not be denied; it being as much the nature of mind to perceive, think, desire, and act in some way as it is of matter to be passive, inert, and motionless. No one, therefore, can believe that God, from everlasting to everlasting, would sit idle on his throne, looking out into vacancy—his knowledge, wisdom, benevolence, and power permitted to stagnate; or that, being social, as benevolence always is, he would live in silence and eternal solitude; and yet that such a mind should act without some definite desire and determination of plan, is not to be believed or conceived. It is inseparable from the nature of mind to act with foresight, design, and plan. The man who discloses no associated thought, desire, or plan, or executive energy, is an idiot. The very thought of an undesigning Omnipotent mind on the throne, throwing out around itself at random insulated almighty efforts, is terrific. In view of such an alternative, and recognising a God on the throne, wise, benevolent, and almighty, acting with foresight and design, the universe might burst out in extacy, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, and let the multitude of worlds be glad!"

The decrees of God have respect primarily to what He will do. They are not the rule of our conduct, as they surpass immeasurably what men or angels can do; but they are the plan for the development of the plenitude of his wisdom, benevolence, and power, to satisfy his own judgment and heart, and fill the universal heart of his loyal subjects with confidence, and love, and joy.

The two comprehensive departments of the divine plan are, the creation and government of the mental and of the material universe.

The latter, in itself inert and motionless, God has organised in suns, and worlds, and living things, for the accommodation of minds, and to reflect upon them the evidence of his being and the illuminations of his glory.

For the guidance and government of mind he has provided decretory laws, developed in part in nature, and partly in the revelations of the Bible. The law of the universe of mind is the moral law, as epitomised by our Saviour, which is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." The relative duties by the discharge of which, in our world, this love is to be expressed towards God, ourselves, and our neighbour, are laid down in the Ten Commandments; and, being sinners, what we must do to be saved is taught in the Gospel.

The motives of the divine government are, the attributes and character of God, and the wisdom and benevolence of his laws, under which obedience comprehends fulness of joy, and disobedience a corresponding suffering, and both commensurate with the endless being of his subjects.

These decrees of God are *eternal*, because God, and his knowledge, and wisdom, and benevolence, are eternal; and they are *immutable*, because, to an all-wise God, there are no plans possible better than those he has chosen, and he will not, against motive, turn from the better to the worse. Of course, "known unto God are all his works from the beginning;" his ways are everlasting; "he is in one mind, and who can turn him?"—and still he worketh, and for ever will work, according to the counsel of his own will.

That which moved the self-existent mind to adopt and execute the comprehensive plan of his wisdom was his infinite benevolent desire to extend through the wide universe of intelligent beings the greatest amount and duration of blessedness, to be accomplished by the guidance and administration of his perfect law, and Gospel, and providential government, by the manifestation of his glorious attributes and character; it being the life eternal of the mental universe to know and love and obey God.

I will not ask how it should come to pass that the self-existent Being should be benevolent. It never did *come to pass.* His moral excellence and benevolence, which constitute his glory, and are the joy of the universe, are voluntary, and commensurate with his eternal being. It is the wonder of all wonders but one, and that is, that the indications of such immense wisdom and benevolence should have been developed in a universe of matter without the existence and agency of a wise, benevolent, almighty mind.

This is the meaning of the scriptural declaration, that He made all things for himself and for his own glory. It was for the gratification of his own benevolence in the unspeakable, illimitable, immense, eternal blessedness of his loyal subjects.

How great the comprehensive whole will be, none by searching can find out to perfection. We will only know that the Almighty, the greatest and most active and benevolent intelligence in the universe, has poured floods of blessedness through his intelligent dominions, beyond expression or comprehension great; and that this river of pleasure, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, will never fail or be limited by drought, but will roll on for ever, with broader, deeper tide, and sweeter joys, and louder praises to Him that sitteth upon the

throne, working for ever all things according to the counsel of his will.

Should the existence of any of his subjects become their calamity, it will become such through their own perversion of his wisdom and goodness against the entire moral influence of his law, and Gospel, and government.

Such are the decrees of God—the God that made us and preserved us and hath given his Son to die for us, and his Word and Spirit to save us, if we do not resist and quench their influence. And in this view of the subject each of us may say, How precious have been thy thoughts concerning me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them they are more than I can number. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Having now defined and illustrated the decrees of God, the way is prepared to state and answer some of the various objections which, in all time, have been urged against them; and—

1. It is objected that if God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass, there can be no such thing as free agency and accountability.

ANSWER: That depends on what God has decreed. If he decreed to make man a machine, then, as he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, doubtless he has done so, and man is a machine and not a free agent. But if he decreed to make man a free, accountable agent, then, doubtless, he saw that he could do it, and saw it to be wisest and best to do it, and desired to do it, and determined to do it, and has done it; and man, by the execution of God's decree, is made a free, accountable agent.

If a skilful artisan, with adequate power and skill, determines to make a watch, we do not expect he will make

a steam-engine instead of a watch; or that to all appearance he will construct a watch, but put in a broken spring, or so misplace the wheels that it could not move, like the machine for perpetual motion, which had no defect but that it would not go.

No one thinks that, if God decreed to make a stone, he would create a serpent; and if God has fore-ordained to create, as his noblest work, rational, social, accountable beings, commencing beyond the reach of thought, and rolling the tide of blessedness through eternity, why should it be that instead of this he has created unthinking machines, or irrational animals? Did he not understand the limits of possibility, and the resources of his power, and the dictates of his wisdom and benevolence? Every attribute of God, then, stands as a voucher that he has not changed his counsel or marred his work by creating a fatality where he intended to create free agency.

OBJECTION 2.—But, at any rate, it is said, the doctrines of God's decrees and man's free agency are a mystery: they never have been reconciled, and never will be.

ANSWER: If they are a mystery, then you do not know that they are contradictory; and if they never have been reconciled and never will be, then you may safely let them alone and attend to those things which belong to your peace which are revealed and which you do understand.

But the decrees of God and man's free agency are not a mystery; they are two intelligible revealed facts. God has decreed to create free agents as his most wise and benevolent work, and to maintain free agency for ever by the administration of perfect laws perfectly administered. But the moral government of God by laws and motives is no more coercive than family government, or a civil republican government. Parents form purposes concerning the character and conduct of their children, and often secure

their execution by the wise and benevolent administration of judicious laws without at all destroying their free agency, but, on the contrary, securing the needed and healthful exercise of it by training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The constitution, and laws, and administration of our national government diversify endlessly the exercises of our free agency, but never destroy it. On the contrary, it is the laws and moral government of the family, and the state, and the nation, which stand between anarchy and despotism. And cannot God, as well as man, administer a moral government of institutions and laws without destroying free agency? It is true that a government of irresistible omnipotence has never been reconciled with free accountable agency. But a moral government of institutions and laws has never been reconciled with free agency, only because there has never been the shadow of a contradiction to be reconciled.

OBJECTION 3.—But it is said, God must have foreseen all the actions of his creatures; and therefore they cannot but do just as he foresaw they would do.

ANSWER: The foreknowledge of God is not the cause of human actions, and is not that which makes them certain. Men may foresee what their fellow-men in given circumstances will do, but that does not compel them to do it; and God's foreknowledge that a man will commit murder no more makes it necessary than my seeing it beforehand. The Congress of the United States, when they make laws touching finance, agriculture, and commerce, foresee in many respects how men will act under them. But their foreknowledge does not destroy the freeness of the foreseen action, or make it irresistibly certain; and no more does the foreknowledge of God.

Besides, God's knowledge is according to truth; and inasmuch as he decreed to make men free agents, and knows

that he has done so, he foresaw their actions as the actions of free agents, and not as the actions of machines, or the results of necessity.

OBJECTION 4.—But it is said, if God has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, then at least all actions are certain, and, if certain, cannot be avoided, and men cannot be free and accountable.

ANSWER: The objection assumes that, in order to free agency and accountability, all the actions of free agents must be *uncertain*. But does not God from eternity know what he himself will do? and does that destroy his freedom and desert of praise? and is not the obedience of saints and angels certain, and is it therefore not voluntary and praiseworthy? Do not all wise men lay out their work, and know beforehand what they will do, and does this destroy their free agency, or make them machines?

But if the certainty of an action excludes free agency and induces fatality, the foreknowledge of every man as to *what he will do, for an hour before he does it,* destroys his freedom as really as the eternal foreknowledge of God destroys it; and to secure free agency to God, angels, or men, it becomes indispensable that they all should act without any plan or knowledge of what they will do, even a moment before they do it, constituting a universe of minds perfectly ignorant of whatever they will do until it comes to pass.

Then it would seem to follow that if a man has been honest all his life, and the merchants and mechanics have all found him honest in his dealings with them for forty years, he has, in the judgment of all, made his honesty so certain as completely to destroy his virtue, and even his free agency and desert of good or evil. It is the glory of God that he is freely and immutably good; of his angels, that they will freely and for ever obey him; and on earth, the more certain it is that a man will cleave to the ways

of truth and rectitude the higher his estimation; while the more certain a man is to lie, and steal, and swear falsely, the deeper the condemnation and disgrace which come upon him. Does a man become a machine whose certainty of honest dealing commands universal confidence? and is he only to be canonised as a free agent and a virtuous man whose eternal alternations of honesty and knavery are such that no mortal can tell what he will do?

Whether the certainty of action destroys free agency depends on *who makes the certainty and how it is made.* If God makes it by irresistible omnipotence, it excludes accountability: but if the free agent, in the regular exercise of all the powers of a free agent, under the perfect laws and administration of God, *chooses* and acts, the choice and the action, though certain, are his own. He makes the certainty.

It was certain to the mind of God that you would be present here this evening. Were you forced to come? Could you not have stayed away? Did you not come freely? Then you know experimentally that certainty and free agency are consistent, and that it is you and not God who makes the certainty which he foresees.

I ask one of you to lift your hand. Do you not feel that you are fully able to do it? Do you not feel that you are just as able to let it alone? Whichever you do you will exercise a conscious free agency. But it is impossible to do both, and God sees which you will do, and your free agency therein.

OBJECTION 5.—But God executes his decrees. He brings to pass by a resistless, inexorable omnipotence what his hand and counsel have determined.

Prove this, and you have gained your point. If God compels volition and action, man is not a free agent, and accountable for his deeds.

But assertion is nothing; and where is the evidence of

God's coercive power in the production of choice and action? Has anyone seen this coercive action of Omnipotence? Has anyone felt the irresistible coercion or seen the apparatus with which he manufactures volition in a man as men sift shot from the lofty tower?

OBJECTION 6.—If God has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, then he is the author of sin.

ANSWER: If God creates free agents and places them under his perfect moral government, and brings the influence of his law, Gospel, and providence to restrain them from sin and allure them to obedience, then is he not the author of sin, though his subjects should transgress. Parents whose children pervert the influence of their excellent character and faithful government are not the authors of their children's sin; and governments which prohibit treason, which still comes to pass in opposition to the whole influence of their benign and faithful administration, are not the authors of treason.

OBJECTION 7.—It is said that motives act upon the mind mechanically, and have the same relation to volition that natural causes have to their effects.

What is a *motive?* It is some good offered to our acceptance, or evil to be avoided; but what resemblance is there between the acceptance of offered pleasure and the smell of a rose, or the taste of an apple, or driving a nail with a hammer, or splitting a log with beetle and wedge, or raising a building with the screw, or hoisting the mainsail of a ship with the tackle, or prying a rock up with fulcrum and lever? Did anyone ever find himself split in twain, or screwed up, or hoisted, or pried up, by motive, or driven without will or against will?

Motives do not act mechanically on the mind; they are merely the occasions of choice, in the view of which mind makes its diversified elections, and without which

it could not act freely at all. For who could choose where there is no object of choice before the mind?

It has been alleged in evidence of physical coercion that men in the same circumstances act alike, as uniformly as natural causes produce the same effect in the same circumstances; but it is just as consistent with free agency that men in the same circumstances, and in view of the same motives, should choose alike as that they should differ. Offer a bribe to a thousand honest and honourable men to betray their country, and they would all act freely and act alike; offer the same to a thousand unprincipled desperadoes, and *they* will act freely and will act alike. But we need not spend time to disprove that which is disproved by the eternal purpose of God to create an intelligent universe of free agents, to be governed by perfect laws, perfectly administered, for the manifestation of his benevolence and the happiness of his subjects.

But, to settle the matter, let us lift the veil and see and examine what the influences are by which God administers his moral government. Indubitably they are all comprehended in the moral law, the Gospel, the providence of God, and the influence of his Spirit, including the rewards of obedience and the penalties of transgression. But does the moral law compel men to sin? It requires them to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; and their neighbour as themselves. And the motives are an immortality of the most perfect blessedness, or of corresponding evil, the fruit of disobedience. And do these precepts and these superlative motives, all concurring to secure obedience and deter from sin, compel men to sin? The entire influence is the other way—to restrain from sin; and were it not that rebellion actually prevails, we might be tempted to think disobedience against such motives impossible. And it is not by

them that men are forced to sin, but the power of a desperate free agency of self-destruction that triumphs over them. It might just as well be said that the attraction of gravitation dissociates and scatters the planetary system from their parent sun as that the motives of eternal life and eternal death compel men to withdraw from the attractions of divine excellence and joy, and as wandering stars to roll in blackness of darkness through interminable woe.

Does the Gospel, then, compel men to sin? Certainly its motives are greater than those of mere law—the greatest in the universe of God, awarding to obedience greater blessedness, and to transgression greater sufferings; and in the Gospel, God the Father, with paternal importunity, commands and intreats men to repent—and God the Saviour invites and intreats, and when they demur expostulates, and when they have sinned away their day of grace weeps over them. And does this love of the Saviour, which passes knowledge, force them to sin?

The providence of God is the administration of motives in the form of mercies and afflictions. But knowest thou not, O man, that the goodness of God does not constrain thee to sin, but leadeth, tendeth, to repentance? and that afflictions are the rod of paternal discipline, made necessary by incorrigible wickedness, and employed as among the last remedies by merciful Heaven?

Do the strivings of the Spirit deter men from obedience, and compel them to sin? His strivings are all just the other way, and the influence he employs is that of the law, and the Gospel, and the discipline of mercies and afflictions, in the providence of God. *And it might as well be said that all the rivers in creation are compelled by the attraction of gravity to run up-hill as that God, by his law, or Gospel, or providence, or Spirit, compels men to sin.*

OBJECTION 8.—I did not make myself—God made me such as I am.

But is self-creation essential to accountability? And are none accountable but those who made themselves? Then who is a free accountable agent? Not God, surely, for he did not create himself. Not angels, nor men, nor devils, for none of these made themselves; and, if self-creation is essential to free agency, there is no such thing—never was, and never will be. For how is a non-existent agent to commence the work of creating himself before he exists?—*nothing* begin to energise to create *something*, and so great a something as mind, free, accountable and immortal?

Moreover, are you sure that your constitutional powers of mind and body are entirely such as God made them? Has no adverse variation come upon them, through the medium of temptation, by the consent of your evil and deceitful heart?

What perversion is there of constitutional powers in infancy and in early childhood? How few are the aberrations compared with those of early youth, and these compared with riper manhood!

It has been said that the perversion of our constitutional powers is occasioned by the earlier development of the passions and appetites—before reason, and judgment, and conscience have laid their hand upon the helm, amid the perils of inexperienced navigation. But the fact is otherwise. The wisdom and goodness of God are eminently manifest in preparing the young voyager for the perils of life, when passion and appetite make their insurrection and onset. The family is prepared for their safe retreat, where protracted dependence on parental care inspires affection and fidelity on the one part, and obedience on the other. The susceptibility also of childhood favours the work of

early government, and deep and lasting impressions, and powerful associations and habits of virtuous nature, and renders even discipline and self-government easy and permanent, which in riper age might be impossible and unavailing.

The early intercourse of parents and children in the family affords frequent and long-continued opportunities to instruct and form the pliant and susceptible minds of children.

So, also, the disposition of young children to place implicit confidence in their parents gives them a great ascendancy, and blessed opportunities for the work of instruction and impression; and so great is it that the fulfilment of parental duty, through the course of instruction and government which God has appointed in the family, would lead us to anticipate early the era of their conversion, rather than the insurrectionary triumph of appetite and passion. Moreover, the distinctions of right and wrong, and reason and conscience, gain a powerful ascendancy during the period of family discipline, before the dangerous passions and appetites become the sources of temptation and danger. Usually, during the first twelve years of childhood all those storms of passion and appetite sleep which afterwards wreck so many youthful navigators. Instead of being, therefore, the period of premature temptation and ruin, the morning of our day is the most clear, mild, even, and munificent of divine and parental care. It is a fact that the best and most powerful and abiding impressions are made then; the foundations of future principle and efficacious habits; the landmarks which the floods do not sweep away; the cords which, when winds and waves beat, hold the ship, and bring it into port. Instead, therefore, of childhood and youth being the corrupting age, and a constitutional work of God, it is the

conservatory, forming age, without which the experience of subsequent life will be a universal shipwreck.

But you follow nature, you say. And what is the nature which you follow? God is a very large portion of nature, and your relation to him as your Creator, the upholder of your being, the author of all your blessings for the present and the future life. Do you follow Him? Do you recognise and fill up the relations in which you stand to him? Do you love him, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal? Do you love yourself, and observe the various laws of your own nature? Do you heed duly the laws of nature around you, and never, by their perversion, make them the instruments of ruin to yourself? If you do this, you are a healthy, happy, holy man—otherwise, you are much mistaken in supposing you follow nature.

OBJECTION 9.—It is said that the decrees of God imply the immutability of the laws of nature, and supersede the efficacy of prayer, and the use of means for personal or national safety; and that prayer and fasting, to avert personal or public calamities, are of no more avail to that end than they are to suspend the attraction of gravity.

This is an objection published in a newspaper in Boston, in consequence of a recommendation by Congress of a day of fasting and prayer, with reference to the commencement of cholera in several of our cities.

My answer (which, at my request, was published in the newspaper at the time) is as follows:—

The objection belongs to a Turkish and not a Christian philosophy. It is a Turkish way of abolishing fear and obtaining tranquillity in danger, to persuade men that their fate is so immutably fixed that there is no hope of change even from God; that he has constructed the ponderous machine, adjusted its wheels, hung on its

weights, swung the pendulum, and turned his back upon it, and his ear from the cry of the hapless millions who fall in the course of its bloody track. To my mind, this is a terrible philosophy, and this a horrible world to live in, where prayers, and hopes in God's mercy, the last resource of the impotent and guilty, are cut off by the shears of an inexorable fate. It is a philosophy, also, which virtually subverts the moral government of God over nations, and the interposition of a particular providence to meet, in answer to prayer, the exigencies of individuals, families, and nations.

The reality of the divine moral government over nations is inscribed on every page of history in the Bible, and its necessity to restrain men from sin has been fearfully attested by the animalism, and anarchy, and ferocity, which rolled the wave of desolation over the nation which denied God's being, and blotted out his Sabbath, and burnt the Bible, and wrote over the gates of their burying-grounds that death is an eternal sleep. That heretofore God has employed physical causes as motives in the administration of his moral government is as certain as the records of his Word. Cold and heat, day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, peace and war, sickness and health, have been employed by Heaven as motives to obedience and restraints from sin; and do operate to diversify indefinitely and continually the moral influence under which all the millions of mankind act and form their characters. Now, is all this endless variety of moral influence, with which physical laws are clothed, wholly unmodified by the wise and merciful interposition of a particular providence? Is all this extent and variety of motive, which brings home to the bosom of every free agent on earth three-fourths of those influences which decide his action and character, hung on one great wheel,

whose constant turning brings them round so as rightly to divide, and wisely to apply to each subject, his portion of moral influence in due season? All the laws of nature march right on, without variation in themselves, or shadow of turning; but the shades of human character and conduct are so innumerable and constantly changing that the laws of nature could not hit one time in a thousand, nor one time in millions, the complex moral changes in a city, a nation, or a world. You might as well fix all the guns of creation in one direction, to hit all the birds in creation, that in all directions travel the air. If this were possible to God, to men it does not appear a very probable theory of the manner in which God actually administers his special moral government, and can scarcely fail to disarm the providence of God of its entire power as a moral administration. But suppose the ever-wakeful supervision of Heaven, instead of this great wheel, watching with tireless benevolence over the concerns of every individual and nation, in whom all live, and move, and have their being, and on whom they wait to receive their meat in due season; from whose warm heart and open hand, by the ministry of his agents, cometh every good and perfect gift, who made the laws of nature to produce their results by the modifying influence of his power, and wisdom, and benevolence in moral government, and not to make a splendid display of mere mechanical ingenuity, but, like his law in the hand of a mediator, to be employed, for purposes of judgment and mercy, in the government and redemption of a sinful world. Then why should not the application of these laws vary as the character and conduct of his subjects under their administration vary? The whole apparent difficulty is created by supposing that God made the laws of nature for a splendid, high, and dreadful immutability, utterly inconsistent with the varia-

tions and uses demanded by a moral government. But if a moral government was the primary and original design, and the foundations of the earth were laid, and the heavens spread abroad, and the atmosphere poured out, and all material agents formed, as subordinate in the hand of God to this design, why, then the various and modified uses of these laws by Heaven for punishment or protection, graduated by the conduct and character of his subjects, no more imply a change of these laws than the farmer's various applications of the implements of husbandry imply a change in his plans of agriculture, or in the laws of earth. To change the laws of nature, their attributes must be changed, or they must be applied to uses for which they were not made. To employ fire for purposes of frost, poison for nutrition, water for respiration, and the solid earth for navigation, and the ocean for purposes of agriculture, would be to change the laws of nature; but to use these elements for indefinitely various and different purposes, as the wisdom of God may indicate, in the manner most efficacious for the moral government of nations, implies no change of plan or law, except on the gratuitous assumption that these laws were made only for the purposes of a stately immutability, and that God preferred to administer his moral government by a comprehensive mechanism, rather than by the modifying influences of his continual wise and benevolent supervision.

If it can be shown that their immutability will bring out the best results, then, doubtless, they are immutable. But is it quite logical to take this for granted? And where is the evidence of the fact? How does it appear that the most perfect system may not be one and is not one in which the great laws of nature shall be sufficiently uniform in their operation for all the general purposes of

science and experience, and yet be liable to such suspension, or variation, and application, as shall afford evidence of a divine interposition, and the means of authenticating the communications of the divine will, and demonstrating the continuance of God at the helm both of his natural and moral governments? Are not miracles—the great seal of Heaven, which none can counterfeit to authenticate divine communications, and, if need be, to display the presence and agency of God among his unbelieving and mutinous subjects—just as important in their place and for that particular purpose as the benign stability of nature's laws in other cases? If there were not a general uniformity of nature's laws, miracles and judgments would have no significancy; and if there were a strict immutability they would have no place; while general uniformity and occasional innovation meet precisely all the great exigencies of the providential government of God for the ultimate moral renovation of the earth.

Hume has asserted that any innovation upon the laws of nature is contrary to all experience; but he had not lived in all time and everywhere, and how did he ascertain what had been the past universal experience of the whole world? He could learn it only from history, while there is not in any nation a history, fabulous or inspired, which does not attest the existence of some supernatural interposition. If he meant only contrary to his own experience, that would no more prove universal immutability of nature's laws than the experience of the torrid zone would disprove the existence of ice in the frigid.

I have only to add that the philosophy of the immutability of the physical laws of the universe, as unaffected by human guilt, or penitence and prayer, and the various exigencies of the divine moral government, seems to me entirely unscriptural. I do not mean that all who have

adopted it are infidels, for it is a specious philosophy, all of whose relations and bearings are not immediately perceived. But I do mean that is in my view wholly and irreconcileably adverse to the entire testimony of the Bible; so that no man can be a full and consistent believer in the inspiration of the Bible, and at the same time a disciple of this philosophy.

According to the Bible, the government of God over nations is a moral government, universal and entire; and his dominion over the material world, in the administration of a particular providence accommodated to the purposes of moral government, and diversified according to the exigencies created by the character and deeds of his subjects, for punishment to the incorrigible, and for purposes of forbearance and forgiveness to those who break off their sins and turn to God, is announced and repeated with equal clearness and frequency on the sacred page. All the great laws of nature are the ministers of his court, the body-guard of his throne, to check rebellion and keep back his mutinous subjects from presumptuous wickedness, as well as to encamp around about those that fear him, and bear messages of mercy to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word. He sends rain or drought, mildew, and murrain, and pestilence, and famine. Let it not be said that all of this is poetry, or allegory, or Jewish philosophy. It is poetry inspired of Heaven, and philosophy taught of God, which holy men of old spake and recorded as the Holy Ghost gave them utterance. It is true that, in the Jewish nation, for the purpose of special effect in the protection of the religion and worship of Jehovah against the encroachments of idolatry, the principle of temporal rewards and punishments, according to character and deeds, was rendered more emphatical than it could have been by the regular

course of the laws of nature, unattended by miraculous interpositions. But the same general principle is recognised as extending to all nations. The eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah might suffice to prove this. But whoever reads the prophecies, and profane history, will find in the one predicted visitations upon nations according to character and deeds, and in the other the record of their literal fulfilment. And whoever will sit down at the feet of Christ may hear from his lips that God clothes the grass, feeds the ravens, arrays in beauty the lily, numbers the hairs of our head, and notes the fall of the sparrow.

I should not have troubled you with this communication, if I had not regarded the philosophy which I oppose as subversive not only of the Bible, but of the doctrine of the providential government of God, which gives force to admonition, and hope to reformation and humiliation and prayer. Upon the necessity and power of a retributive providence to purposes of national morality I need not amplify. It appals the hardened sceptic. It cools the delirious fever of worldliness, and tames the madness of passion, and puts out for a time the fire of ambition. It rouses the thoughtless to consideration, and sends its terrific notes of loud admonition into high places of voluptuous guilt as well as the low places of vulgar vice; while in thick showers, and with deadly aim, its arrows fall upon the retreats of crime; and it carries into all ranks and orders of society a deep and all-pervading sense of absolute dependence upon God. When mists which no man can dissipate gather about the sun, and his rays fall cold and powerless upon the earth—when the wind, with steady breath, for months blows contaminated atmosphere across the Atlantic—when the destroying angel has passed the highways of nations and the barriers of the north, and has received his commission and commenced his work in the

great cities of our land—who does not feel that it is time to proclaim a fast, and to convoke the people to acknowledge the hand of God, and to put away all evil-doing, and supplicate mercy of the God who spared Nineveh, and would have spared even Sodom if there had been only ten righteous persons to pray for it? especially when the visitation finds us so eminently fitted for destruction; our Sabbath falling before cupidity, the influence of the government of God before infidelity, and our national morality before temptation; while from abroad and at home masses of ignorance, and filth, and crime, are rising up in our cities, to mock Heaven, and serve as the conductors of his burning indignation.

To the preceding argument, we add that the particular providential government of God, in answer to prayer, corresponds with the natural feelings of all men, and constitutes between this world of sin and a merciful God more noble and more blessed relations than can possibly be maintained by a government of immutable eternal laws.

If, some six thousand years ago, God put in order, on the stereotyped chart of nature's laws, the cares and sorrows which betide each individual, with their corresponding supports and deliverances or punishments, according to our character and deeds, making no provision for special interpositions of his providence in answer to the prayers of his children, then, with a tenacious memory, and keen vision, and strong faith, we might, amid clouds and darkness, thread our way upward through nature's works to nature's God.

But this view of the subject would throw us back an immeasurable distance from God, our Father and benefactor—like the sun, invisible to the naked eye, and seen only by the telescope in the depths of space. It is what God has done once ages ago, and by one act and by

one impulse of his heart; and the system moves on by the energy of that one immutable will. No bow of hope appears upon the bosom of the dark and distant cloud, and no paternal smile illumines it, and no warm heart opens the bountiful hand in the dispensation of mercies new every morning and fresh every evening. It is a cheerless and dark philosophy in a frozen world.

Our greatest difficulty in sorrow is darkness of mind, and fear, from a sense of sin, and dim apprehensions concerning God—an unrealising state of mind—the veil upon the heart. But a world made and governed once for all by laws which God has stamped on matter is poorly calculated to overcome this malady, and would rather strengthen unbelief and extinguish hope; while the system in which these laws are the instruments of his power, and the high ministers of his court, the all-surrounding agents by whom he flies to our relief, bring him with immense illumination into his own world. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." This fills the world with his presence, not as a non-resident occasional visitant, but with his benignant eye constantly upon us, and his ear open to our cry; and sets the Lord alway before us, on our right hand and on our left.

The government of the world in answer to prayer is eminently calculated to restrain from sin, and give energy to the law and the gospel of God.

The effect of bestowing pardon and blessings unasked upon a world of rebels would be to create stupidity and presumptuous expectations of impunity in sin. What if pardon were sent after thieves and robbers, and obtruded upon them unsought; would it not encourage fraud and

robbery, by the well-sustained hopes of impunity? Do not personal reformation and public safety demand that men should feel their guilt and danger, and repent and reform, and supplicate the mercy of God, and receive pardon through faith in the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ?

The exigencies of temptation, also, are often as perilous to our souls, and as disproportioned to our strength, as the power of the elements is to our frail bodies. What, then, shall we do when assailed by temptation? Have we no resource but the laws of nature? Then are we undone. For these may be the very laws we have broken, and include the penalties which we have incurred; and since they act upon our own perverted nature, they give potency to temptation, with no resources to sustain us under it. For to maintain its power without punishment, or to punish and yet reclaim, is what the law cannot do.

Have we, then, no resources in prayer?—but, when the tide comes in, must we be swept before it, and wait for its ebb, when it turns? Alas! before the flood turns we are wrecked, and by its ebb shall be stranded and lost. We need, in the varieties and floods of temptation, a present help which the laws of nature do not possess and God only can afford. In the very acme of our danger, if prayer may not avail, we are without hope. But we have a Saviour who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and who, having himself been tempted, is able and willing to succour them that are tempted.

A providential moral government administered with reference to prayer, is efficient, beyond all others, in producing hope and enterprise. It includes the pressure of necessity, and a sense of impotency, associated with earnest desire, and the cheering influence of hope in God.

But take away the last, and you substitute the impotency of blank despair. For prayer is always for aid where human efforts are unavailing; but environ the mind with danger, and fill it with intense desire of escape, and cut off the hope of divine aid, and you create the sullen, stupid inaction of the sailor in the storm, when all hope that he shall be saved is taken away. But desire and impotency, coupled with hope, constitute the most powerful spring of action which can be applied to mind in distress.

Again, since God is wise and good, we should expect that he would provide, in this world of error and lies, some adequate means of finding out the truth. But we witness and experience the imbecility of reason and philosophy to settle and satisfy the mind; and the laws of nature give no response to the inquiry, What is truth? But has God left us to grope in total darkness? Is there no remedy but speculation—ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth? If God does not hear prayer, there is no remedy.

But for such a one it is written, in letters of fire, upon the inspired page, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." Do the laws of nature, in their onward march, give such responses?

This dependence upon God, as answering prayer, moreover renders us sincere, and diligent, and faithful in our researches. By nature the heart is deceitful; and prejudice, and appetite, and passion bias the judgment, and often men think they are candid when, in fact, they are deeply prejudiced, and pertinaciously opposed to the truth. But when a man goes alone before his Maker to pray that

he will grant him wisdom to know the truth, the responsibilities of honesty, and sincerity, and candour, and faithfulness are pressed upon him, with a power as nearly unevadable as possible, and he has the best prospects of divine guidance.

We should expect, also, from the wisdom and goodness of God, that he would administer his providence in such a manner as would create the deepest sense of dependence, and a living, unwaning gratitude for benefits received. But the blessings of Providence bestowed on us, the results of a general divine benevolence, by the agency of general laws, do not affect us as do those blessings which imply a present personal interest, and a kind attention to our necessities. Man is so constituted that experimental knowledge is, of all knowledge, the most real, impressive, and efficacious.

Let a man without any sense of hunger be *told* that his system demands nutrition daily, and that God supplies it insensibly, or that he is sick, without any perception of weakness or pain. No evidence of this kind would make him feel the reality and value of the divine benefactions, like meeting the *felt* demands of hunger, and staying the ravages of *painful* disease, and that *in answer to prayer.*

It is by wants multiplied and felt, and made known to God by prayer, and providentially answered, that a fresh and inspiring intercourse is kept up between ourselves and God. The gratitude which attends the blessings of education, the protection of law, and even the atmosphere we breathe, as well as the light that guides and cheers us, is faint compared with that which is awarded to the man who steps forth to save his country in cases of emergency or danger. The child whose wants are anticipated by parental kindness, superseding the necessity of *asking*, is usually a cold-hearted, unthankful, undutiful child.

You cannot make common providential blessings produce the effects of special favours; nor do the cold results of general laws make the same impression as the kind care of a heavenly Father, who watches over us, and averts danger, and supplies our wants in answer to prayer.

Indeed, there would seem to be no possible way in which the intercourse of sinful subjects with their lawgiver and Saviour may be secured, so honourable to God and so profitable and delightful to the sinner, as for him to feel his wants daily, and daily to receive, in connexion with prayer, his supplies from the hand of God.

Finally, prayer is one of the most efficacious means of grace. Its tendencies are powerful to repress light-minded giddiness, to abate the delirium of pleasure, to silence the din of business, to alleviate the distractions of care, to inspire thoughtfulness, and awaken anxiety, fear, and that sense of sin which prepares the way for godly sorrow. The subject is withdrawn from all earthly scenes to commune with his own heart and with his God; his prejudices, his appetites, and his passions sleep; the dreams of philosophy have fled; while he kneels before his Maker, and, under the inspection of his searching eye, makes confession of his sins, and spreads his wants before him, and usually is convinced of sin, and humbled, and converted, and sanctified through the instrumentality of prayer.

LECTURE XIV.

THE MEMORY OF OUR FATHERS.

And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

THE history of the world is the history of human nature in ruins. No state of society which corresponds with the capacity of enjoyment possessed by man, or with his conceptions and desires, has been permanent and universal. Small portions only of the human family have at the same time enjoyed a state of society in any considerable degree desirable; while much the greatest part of mankind have, in all ages, endured the evils of barbarism and despotism.

It is equally manifest that this unhappy condition of our race has not been the result of physical necessity, but of moral causes. The earth is as capable of sustaining a happy as a miserable population; and it is the perversion of her resources, and of the human faculties, which has made the misery of man so great. The human intellect has given proof of vigour and ingenuity sufficient to bless the world; and powerful efforts have been made in every age by afflicted humanity to surmount this downward bias, and rise to permanent enjoyment. Egypt, in her monumental ruins, affords evidence of a high state of the arts. In Greece, a vigorous intellect and favouring clime thrust up from the dead level around her a state of society comparatively cultivated and happy; but the sun of her prosperity blazed upon surrounding darkness to

set in a night of ages. Rome fought her way to dominion and civilisation, and furnished specimens of mental vigour and finished culture; but the superstructure of her greatness was reared by the plunder of a devastated world. Commerce, which gave to cities a temporary eminence, elevated but little the moral condition of the multitude; and science, which was restored to modern Europe at the Reformation, and commerce and the arts, which have followed in her train, have not, to this day, disenthralled the nations.

From these experiments, so long and so hopelessly made, it appears that in the conflict between the heart and the intellect of man victory has always declared on the side of the heart, which has led many to conclude that the condition of man in respect to any universal abiding melioration is hopeless. The Bible throws light upon this dark destiny of our race. A voice from Heaven announces the approach of help from above. "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new."

The renovation here announced is a moral renovation, which shall change the character and condition of men. It will not be partial in its influence, like the sun shining through clouds on favoured spots, but co-extensive with the ruin. Nor shall its results be national glory, which gilds only the palace, and cheers only the dwellings of the noble. It shall bring down the mountains, and exalt the valleys; it shall send liberty and equality to all the dwellings of men. Nor shall it stop at the fireside, or exhaust its blessings in temporal mercies; it shall enter the hidden man of the heart, and there destroy the power which has blasted human hopes, and baffled human efforts. Nor will the change be transient—it is the last dispensation of Heaven for the relief of this miserable

world, and shall bring glory to God in the highest, and upon earth peace, and good will to men.

Many have doubted whether such a renovation of the world will ever be accomplished; but He that sat upon the throne said, "It is done"—that is, it is as certain as if it had come to pass.

I shall submit to your consideration at this time some of the reasons which justify the hope that our nation has been raised up by Providence to exert an efficient instrumentality in this work of moral renovation.

I observe, then, that for the accomplishment of this renovation great changes are required in the civil and religious condition of nations.

1. The monopoly of the soil must be abolished. Hitherto, the majority of mankind who have tilled the earth have been slaves or tenants. The soil has been owned by kings, and military chieftains, and nobles; and by them rented to landlords, and by these to still smaller dealers; and by these again it has been divided and sub-divided until the majority who paid the rent have sustained in the sweat of their brow not only their own families but three or four orders of society above them; while they themselves have been crushed beneath the weight and have lived on the borders of starvation—the sickness of a week, and often of a single day, rendering them paupers.

This same monopoly of the soil has sent another large class of the community into manufacturing establishments, to wear out their days in ignorance and hopeless poverty; and another to the camp and navy, where honour and wealth await the few, and ignorance and an early grave the many.

The consequence of excluding such numbers from the possession and healthful cultivation of the soil has been ignorance, improvidence, reckless indifference, turbulence,

and crime. Tortured by their oppressions, and unrestrained by moral principle, they have been prepared for desperate deeds. Such a state of society cannot be made happy; the evil is radical, and can only be remedied by giving a new direction to the physical, moral, and intellectual energies of men. We might as well band with iron the trees of the forest and expect their expansion, or throw upon them in stinted measure the light and the rain of heaven and expect their luxuriant growth, as to cramp the human mind by unequal institutions and expect the development of its resources in a happy state of society. Room for action must be afforded, and light must be poured upon the understanding, and motive pressed upon the heart. 'Man must be unshackled and stimulated.' But to accomplish this *the earth must be owned by those who till it.* This will give action to industry, vigour to the body, and tone to the mind, and, by the attendant blessing of Heaven, religion to the heart. From agriculture, stimulated by personal rights, will result commerce, science, arts, liberty, and independence.

As the attraction of gravity is the great principle of motion in the material world, so the possession of the earth in fee simple by the cultivator is the great principle of action in the moral world. Nearly all the political evils which have afflicted mankind have resulted from the unrighteous monopoly of the earth; and the predicted renovation can never be accomplished until to some extent this monopoly has passed away, and the earth is extensively tilled by the independent owners of the soil.

2. To effect the moral renovation of the world a change is required in the prevailing forms of government.

The monopoly of power must be superseded by the suffrages of freemen. While the great body of the people are excluded from all voice and influence in legislation, it

is impossible to constitute a state of society such as the faculties of man allow and the word of God predicts. While the few govern without responsibility, they will seek their own elevation and depress the multitude. Power, without responsibility, has always developed a selfish disregard of human rights and happiness. To elevate society, and bring out the human energies in a well-ordered state of things, the mass of mankind must be enlightened and qualified for self-government, and must yield obedience to delegated power; *for it is impossible for men to have themselves wisely and safely governed, without knowledge and power in their own hands, which can create a feeling of responsibility in those who govern.*

3. Before the moral renovations of the world can be achieved, the rights of conscience must also be restored to man.

Few of the millions that have peopled the earth have been qualified by knowledge, or permitted by the governments under which they lived, to read the Bible, and judge for themselves. The nominal religions of this world have either been supported by governments, which, of course, have prescribed the creed, and modelled the worship, and controlled the priesthood, or have been controlled and crushed by the despotic power of the government and priesthood united. From such a state of things, what better results could be expected than that ambitious men should be exalted to the sacred office, while religion itself was despised and persecuted? Governments and ecclesiastics, then, must cease to dictate what men shall believe, and in what manner they shall worship God. The Church must be emancipated from worldly dominion, and enjoy that liberty wherewith Jesus Christ has made her free.

But is it to be expected that kingly governments shall cease, and the republican form become universal? I shall

not stop now to discuss this question. I would only suggest the inquiry, whether monarchical governments can be sustained without a nobility and an established religion; and whether these privileged orders can exist without that monopoly of the soil, and of political influence, and of the rights of conscience, which is destructive to a religious and happy state of society. That governments will change their name, or all their ancient forms, I will not say; but that they will, under some form, become so far popular in their spirit as that the political power shall be in the hands of the people cannot be doubted.

It has been contended that Christianity cannot exist in this world without the aid of religious establishments; but with more truth it might be said that, from the beginning to this day, it has existed in spite of them. It took possession of the Roman empire in the face of a formidable establishment of false religion, and has survived the deadly embrace of establishments nominally Christian; and now, bursting from their alliance, finds in them the most bitter opposition to evangelical doctrine and vital godliness.

To accomplish these changes in the civil and religious condition of the world, revolutions and convulsions are doubtless indispensable. The usurpation of the soil will not be relinquished spontaneously, nor the chains be knocked off from the body and mind of man by the hands which for ages have been employed to rivet them. He that sitteth upon the throne must overturn and overturn before his rights and the rights of man will be restored. Revolutions, of course, are predicted, such as shall veil the sun, and turn the moon into blood, and shake the earth with the violence of nation dashing upon nation, until every despotic government shall be thrown down; and chaos resume its pristine reign, until the Spirit of God

shall move again upon the face of the dark deep, and bring out a new creation. This day of vengeance is no doubt begun, and will no doubt continue, until He that sitteth upon the throne shall have made all things new.

But, to the perfection of this work, a great example is required, of which the world may take knowledge, and which shall inspire hope, and rouse and concentrate the energies of man. But where should such an experiment be made? Africa requires for herself the commiseration of the world; and in Europe and Asia it would require ages to dig up the foundations of despotism, and remove the rubbish, to prepare the way for such a state of society as we have described: this, too, will have been done in opposition to proscription and organised resistance. There is also such a mass of uninformed mind accustomed to crouch under burdens, and so much is required to prepare it for civil liberty, that little hope remains that the whole world, undirected and unstimulated by example, will ever disenthral itself. Some nation, itself free, is needed, to blow the trumpet and hold up the light. But in England, though she enjoys to a great extent the blessings of civil liberty, there is so great a monopoly of the soil and of power, and so much overturning is feared and needed, that it is only in stinted measures, and with circumspect policy, that she can deal out her sympathy, and hold up her light. A more vigorous ally to liberty is needed, which should, with a fearless heart and powerful hand, push on the work. But where could such a nation be found? It must have been created, for it had no existence upon the earth three hundred years ago. Look now at the history of our fathers, and behold what God hath wrought. They were such a race of men as never before laid the foundations of an empire—athletic, intelligent, and pious. But how should this portion of a nation's population be uprooted and driven into exile? They

were not permitted to remain at home. In that age of darkness and land of bondage, they had formed some just conceptions of civil and religious liberty, and would fain have modified the civil government and the Church of God according to the Gospel. But the reformation from Popery, superintended by government, and regulated by policy, stopped short of what the pious expected and desired. The Puritans could not in all things conform, and were not permitted to dissent; and thus they were driven into exile, and compelled to lay the foundations of a new empire. And now behold their institutions—such as the world needs, and, attended as they have been by the power of God, able to enlighten and renovate the world! They recognise the equal rights of man; they give the soil to the cultivator, and self-government and the rights of conscience to the people. They enlighten the intellect, and form the conscience, and bring the entire influence of the divine government to bear upon the heart. It was the great object of our fathers to govern men by the fear of the Lord; to exhibit the precepts, apply the motives, and realise the dispositions which the word of God inculcates and his Spirit inspires; to imbue families, and schools, and towns, and states, with the wisdom from above. They had no projects of human device, no theories of untried efficacy. They hung all their hopes of civil and religious prosperity upon the word of God, and the efficacy of his Spirit. Nor was theirs the presumptuous hope of grace without works. It was by training men for self-government that they expected to make men free, and by becoming fellow-workers with God that they expected his aid in the production of character; while, by intellectual culture, and moral influence, and divine power, they prepared men to enjoy and perpetuate civil liberty.

The law, with sleepless vigilance, watched over the

family, the Church, and the State; and a vigorous and united public opinion rendered its execution certain and efficacious. Every family was required to possess a Bible, every district a school, and every town a pastor. The law protected the Sabbath, and sustained the public worship of God, and punished immorality, and, with mild but effectual energy, ruled over all. The great excellence of these institutions is, that they are practical and powerful; the people are not free in name and form merely, but in deed and in truth. Were all these forms blotted out this day, the people would still be free, and other forms of civil freedom would arise. The governments are free governments, from the foundation to the top-stone, and of such practical efficacy as to make *free men.* The family, embodying instruction and government, was itself an embryo empire. In the school district, the people were called upon to exercise their own discretion and rights; and in the ecclesiastical society to rear their place of worship, elect their pastor, and provide for his support; and all under the protection of law. The towns, in their popular assemblies, discussed their local interests and administered their own concerns. In these originated the legislature, and from the legislature emanated the courts of justice. In the States, as they are now organised in a nation, all which is local and peculiar is superintended with a minuteness and efficacy which no consolidated government could possibly accomplish. The people have only to ascertain from experience what their convenience or interest demands, and their wish becomes a law; and still in the national government there is all the comprehension of plan, and power of resource, and unity of action, which are required for the highest degree of national energy and prosperity.

It has been doubted whether a republic so extensive as

ours can be held together and efficiently governed; but where State organisations remain, and intellectual and moral influence is maintained, and the habitual exercise of civil and religious liberty from the family upward, we see not why a republic may not be extended indefinitely, and still be the strongest and most effective government in the world.

The origin and history of our nation are indicative of some great design to be accomplished by it. It is a history of perils and deliverances, and of strength ordained out of weakness. The wars with the savage tribes, and with the French, and at last with the English, protracted expense, and toil, and blood through a period of one hundred and fifty years. No nation out of such weakness ever became so strong, or was guided through such perils to such safety. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say—if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul." These deliverances the enemy beheld with wonder, and our fathers with thanksgiving and praise; but, in the whole history of the world, God has not been accustomed to grant signal interpositions without ends of corresponding magnitude to be answered by them. Indeed, if it had been the design of Heaven to establish a powerful nation, in the full enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, where all the energies of man might find scope and excitement, on purpose to show the world, by one great successful experiment, of what man is capable, and to shed light on the darkness, which should awake the slumbering eye, and rouse the torpid mind, and nerve the palsied arm of millions, where could such an experi-

ment have been made but in this country, and by whom so auspiciously as by our fathers, and by what means so well adapted to that end as by their institutions? The course which is now adopted by Christians of all denominations to support and extend, at home and abroad, religious and moral influence, would seem to indicate the purpose of God to render this nation extensively the almoner of his mercy to the world.

For two hundred years the religious institutions of our land were secured by law; but, as our numbers increased, and liberty of conscience resulted in many denominations of Christians, it became impossible to secure by law the universal application of religious and moral influence. And yet without this mighty energy the whole system must fail; for physical power, without religious and moral influence, will not avail to sustain the institutions of civil liberty. We might as well rely on the harvests which our fathers reared for bread as to rely on the external forms of liberty which they established, without the application of that vital energy by which the body politic was animated and moved. But at the very time when the civil law had become impotent for the support of religion and the prevention of immoralities, God began to pour out his Spirit upon the Churches, and voluntary associations of Christians were raised up, to apply and extend that influence which the law could no longer apply. And now we are blessed with societies to aid in the support of the Gospel at home, to extend it to the new settlements, and through the earth. We have Bible Societies, and Tract Societies, and associations of individuals who make it their business to see that every family has a Bible, and every Church a pastor, and every child a catechism. And to these have succeeded Education Societies, that our nation may not outgrow the means of religious instruction. And

while these means of moral culture are supplied, this great nation, from her eminence, begins to look abroad with compassion upon a world sitting in darkness, and to put forth her mighty arm to disenthral the nations and elevate the family of man. Let it be remembered, also, that the means now relied on are precisely those which our fathers applied, and which have secured our prosperity. And when we contemplate the unexampled resources of this country, in men, soil, climate, sea-coast, rivers, lakes, canals, agriculture, commerce, arts, and wealth, and all in connexion with the influence of republican and religious institutions, is it too much to be hoped that God will accept our powerful instrumentality, and make it effectual for the renovation of the world?

The revivals of religion which have prevailed in our land, among Christians of all denominations, furnish cheering evidence of the presence of evangelical doctrine, and of the power of that Spirit by which the truth is made effectual in the salvation of men. These revivals are distinguished by their continuance through a period of fifty years; by their extent, pervading the nation; by their increasing frequency in the same places; by their rapidity and power, often changing, in a few weeks, the character of towns and cities, and even of large districts of country; an earnest of that glorious time when a nation shall be born in a day. They purify our literary institutions, and multiply pastors and missionaries, to cheer our own land and enlighten distant nations. They are without a parallel in the history of the world, and are constituting an era of moral power entirely new. Already the Churches look chiefly to them for their members and pastors, and for that power upon public opinion which retards declension, and gives energy to law, and voluntary support to religious institutions.

These revivals, then, falling in with all these antecedent indications, seem to declare the purpose of God to give a prominent place to this nation in the glorious work of renovating the earth.

If we look at our missionaries abroad, and witness the smiles of Heaven upon their efforts, our confidence that it is the purpose of God to render our nation a blessing to the world will be increased. In talents, and piety, and learning, and doctrine, and civil policy, they are the legitimate descendants of the Puritans. Everywhere they command high respect, and have been distinguished by their judicious and successful efforts. In Ceylon, and the Sandwich Islands, and among the formal and papal Churches of Asia and Europe, and the natives of our own land, they are fast supplanting idolatry and forms by Christian Churches. Revivals of religion cheer and bless them; churches, and all the elements of Christian civilisation, are multiplying around them.

Let this nation go on, then, and multiply its millions and its resources, and bring the whole under the influence of our civil and religious institutions, and with the energies of its concentrated benevolence send out evangelical instruction, and who can calculate what our blessed instrumentality shall have accomplished when He who sitteth upon the throne shall have made all things new?

If Swartz, and Buchanan, and Vanderkemp, and Carey, and Martyn, and Brainerd could, each alone, accomplish so much, what may not be expected from the energies of such a nation as this, consecrated to such a work? Fifty such men as Paul the Apostle, unaided by the resources of systematic benevolence, might evangelise the world. What, then, may not be accomplished by a nation of freemen, destined in little more than half a century to number its fifty millions?

If we consider, also, our friendly relations with the South American states and the close imitation they are disposed to make of our civil and literary institutions, who can doubt that the spark which our forefathers struck will yet enlighten this entire continent? But when the light of such a hemisphere shall go up to Heaven, it will throw its beams beyond the waves; it will shine into the darkness there, and be comprehended; it will awaken desire, and hope, and effort, and produce revolutions and overturnings until the world is free.

From our revolutionary struggle proceeded the revolution in France, and the overturnings and overturnings which have followed in the nations of Europe; and though the bolt of every chain has been again driven, they can no more hold the heaving mass than the chains of Xerxes could hold the Hellespont vexed with storms. Floods have been poured upon the rising flame, but they can no more extinguish it than they can extinguish the fires of Ætna. Still it burns, and still the mountain heaves and murmurs; and soon it will explode with voices, and thunderings, and great earthquakes. And then will the trumpet of jubilee sound, and earth's debased millions will leap from the dust, and shake off their chains, and cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Before we conclude this lecture let us attend to some of the duties to which we are called by our high providential destiny.

And most evidently we are called upon—

1. To cherish with high veneration and grateful recollections the memory of our fathers. Both the ties of nature and the dictates of policy demand this. And surely no nation ever had less occasion to be ashamed of its ancestry, or more occasion for gratulation in that respect; for, while most nations trace their origin to bar-

barians, the foundations of our nation were laid by civilised men—by Christians; many of them men of distinguished families, powerful talents, great learning, pre-eminent wisdom, decision of character, and inflexible integrity. And yet not unfrequently they have been treated as if they had no virtues, while their sins and follies have been sedulously immortalised in satirical anecdote. The influence of such treatment of our fathers is too manifest. It creates and lets loose upon their invaluable institutions the Vandal spirit of innovation and overthrow; for after the memory of our fathers shall have been rendered contemptible, eulogies over their fallen greatness will have little power to perpetuate their institutions. "THE MEMORY OF OUR FATHERS" should be the watchword of liberty throughout the land; for, imperfect as they were, the world before had not seen their like, nor will it soon, we fear, behold their like again. Such models of moral excellence, such apostles of civil and religious liberty, such shades of the illustrious dead, looking down upon their descendants with approbation or reproof, according as they follow or depart from the good way, constitute a censorship inferior only to the eye of God; and to ridicule them is national suicide.

The doctrines of our fathers have been represented as gloomy, superstitious, severe, irrational, and of a licentious tendency; but when other systems shall have produced a piety as devoted, a morality as pure, a patriotism as disinterested, and a state of society as happy, as have prevailed where their doctrines have been most prevalent, it may be in season to seek an answer to this objection. The same doctrines have been charged with inspiring a spirit of dogmatism and religious domination; but in the struggles of man with despotic power for civil liberty, the doctrines of our fathers have been found usually, if

not always, on the side of liberty, as their opposites have been usually found in the ranks of arbitrary power.

The persecutions instituted by our fathers have been the occasion of ceaseless obloquy upon their fair fame. And truly it was a fault of no ordinary magnitude that sometimes they did persecute. But let him whose ancestors were not ten times more guilty cast the first stone, and the ashes of our fathers will no more be disturbed. Theirs was the fault of the age from which they had not wholly escaped ; but it will be easy to show that no class of men had, at that time, approximated so nearly to just apprehensions of religious liberty, and that it is to them that the world is now indebted for the more just and definite views which prevail. More exclamation and invective has been called forth by the few instances of persecution by the fathers of New England than by the massacre of St. Bartholomew and all the fires which lighted the realm of old England for centuries, and drove into exile thousands of her most valuable subjects.

The superstition and bigotry of our fathers are themes on which some of their descendants, themselves far enough from superstition, if not from bigotry, have delighted to dwell. But, when we look abroad and behold the condition of the world compared with the condition of New England, we may justly exclaim, "Would to God that the ancestors of all the nations had been not only almost, but altogether, such bigots as our fathers were !"

Their strictness in the family, and in Church and State, has been complained of as too rigid. But they were laying the foundations of a nation, and applying a moral power whose impulse should extend through ages ; and who that beholds the rapid and appalling moral relaxation of the present day can believe that they put the system in motion with too much vigour? In proportion as their discipline

had been less strict, our present condition had been more alarming, and our future prospects more desperate.

Our fathers have been ridiculed as an uncouth and uncourtly generation; and it must be admitted that they were not as expert in the graces of dress and the etiquette of the drawing-room as some of their descendants. But neither could these have felled the trees, nor guided the plough, nor spread the sail, which they did, nor braved the dangers of Indian warfare, nor displayed the wisdom in counsel which our fathers displayed. And had none stepped upon the Plymouth rock but such effeminate critics as these, the poor natives never would have mourned their wilderness lost, but would have brushed them from the land as they would brush the puny insect from their face; the Pequods would have slept in safety that night which was their last, and no intrepid MASON had hung upon their rear, and driven into exile the panic-struck fugitives.

2. We are called upon to cherish and extend our religious institutions.

Religion was the power on which our fathers relied, the power which has made us what we are, and which must guarantee the perpetuity of our blessings. Every other influence has been tried and has failed, while this has been tried with ample promise of success. The application of religious and moral influence is, therefore, the great duty to which, as a nation, we are called. On this influence depends our rise or fall—our glorious immortality or our hasty dissolution. Everything but this may be safely left to the operation of existing causes. Ambition will secure the interests of education and science; the love of gain will push agriculture, and commerce, and arts; and the pride of liberty will arm the nation, and render it invincible. All these things the nation who have preceded us

have been able to do. But there is a sickness of the heart which they could neither endure nor heal; and with this same disease this nation is sick; and intellectual culture, and civil liberty, and national wealth, will not heal it. There is but one remedy, and that is the preaching of the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from on high; but to render the Gospel effectual, the religious education of the family and the moral culture of our schools and colleges must be secured, and the Sabbath must be rescued from profanation. The Sabbath is the great organ of the divine administration—the only means provided by God to give ubiquity and power to his moral government. The intellectual culture of a nation requires schools and literary institutions; and that the subjects of instruction shall be brought under their influence. But let the fascinations of pleasure, or the demands of labour, withdraw the children and youth from the power of intellectual culture, and ignorance will ensue. In like manner, let the stream of pleasure and of worldly cares bear away the population of the land from the house of God, and roll over the Sabbath, and ignorance of God and of his laws will with equal certainty ensue, irreligion will prevail, and immorality and dissoluteness, to an extent utterly inconsistent with the permanence of republican institutions. Europe can never enjoy civil liberty until she shall do more homage to the Sabbath of God, and we shall enjoy it but a short space after we have ceased to render to God his rights in that sacred day; for all the millions who violate the Sabbath withdraw themselves from the moral power of the divine government, deprive their families of a religious education, and abandon them to the power of their evil hearts and their own bad example. In the mean time, the secular interests of men are so indissolubly connected that the stream of business

put in motion by the wicked on the Sabbath-day, not only pains the eye of the virtuous, but, as it deepens, and roars, and rolls onward its turbid waters, it draws into itself, by the associations of business, a large and still larger portion of the community, until it spreads unresisted over the land, obliterates the government of God, and substitutes covetousness, and pleasure, and dissoluteness, instead of godliness, and the morality of the Gospel.

The present, undoubtedly, is the generation which is to decide the fate of this great empire, by deciding whether the Sabbath of God shall be preserved or blotted out; for the temptations of the seaboard and of canals are immense, and are increasing most fearfully; and unless public sentiment and law shall make a stand soon, we may as well attempt to stop the rolling of the ocean or the current of our mighty rivers. There is evidently now a cheering moral convalescence on this subject, demanding gratitude, and hope, and effort.

The universal extension of our religious institutions is the only means of reconciling our unparalleled prosperity with national purity and immortality. Without the preserving power of religious and moral influence, our rapid increase in wealth will be the occasion of our swift destruction. The rank vegetation of unsanctified enterprise, thrown into one vast reservoir of putrefaction, will send up over the land desolation and death. No nation will be so short-lived as ours, unless we can balance the temptations of our prosperity by moral power. Our sun has moved onward from his morning to his meridian with a rapidity and glory which has amazed the world; but unless we can extend the power of religious institutions through the land, dark clouds will soon obscure his glory, and his descent to a night of ages will be more rapid than his rising.

When we were colonies, or unallied states, the law could make provision for the creation and application of moral power. The law could compel men to desist from secular employments and vain amusements on the Sabbath. The law could compel men to support the Gospel, and attend the public worship of God; and civil officers could see to it that every town should in due time settle a minister, and that every family should possess a Bible and a catechism. But these means of moral influence the law can no longer apply; and there is no substitute but the voluntary energies of the nation itself, exerted by associations for charitable contributions and efforts, patronised by all denominations of Christians, and by all classes of the community who love their country. We may boast of our civil and religious liberty; but they are the fruit of other men's labours into which we have entered, and the effect of institutions whose impulse has been felt long after the hands that reared and launched them have mouldered in the grave. This impulse, too, is fast failing, and becoming yearly more and more disproportioned to the mass that is to be moved by it. Our religious institutions must be invigorated, or we are undone. They must move onward with our flowing emigration to the Mississippi, must pass the Rocky Mountains, and pour their waters of life into the ocean beyond; and from the north to the south they must bear salvation on their waves. Much of this religious enterprise has already scaled the iron mountains, and reached the Pacific, and is energetically engaged in rearing in that nation "born in a day" Christian influence, a light to themselves, and a light to the Gentiles still further west—the millions of China. In this way the nation can save itself; but, unless it can be thoroughly roused to this mighty work, it will, like the man among the tombs, become exceeding

fierce, and turn upon itself its infuriated energies, and pour out its own life-blood by self-inflicted wounds.*

3. We are called upon to give a quickened and extended impulse to our charitable institutions.

These are the providential substitutes for those legal provisions of our fathers which are now inapplicable by change of circumstances. In these the people of our nation must enrol themselves spontaneously, and the spirit of the Puritans be revived for the preservation of their institutions. And now is the time. With our growing prosperity, the fascinations of pleasure increase and the means and temptations to voluptuousness. Now, unless the salt of the earth contained in Christian institutions can be diffused through the land, the mass will putrefy. The tide of business and pleasure bursting from our cities, and rolling on our sea-coast, and flowing in our canals, will soon sweep away the Sabbath, unless a vigorous public sentiment, by the preaching of the Gospel and the

* In many of the discourses and orations which commemorate the deeds of our fathers, their character as the apostles of civil liberty is especially eulogised, while their doctrine, their piety, their Church order, and the other peculiarities of their religious institutions, are passed off with cold commendations, or perhaps palliated and excused as the defects of the age. But no historical fact is more completely established than that religion was the chief end for which our fathers sought this wilderness; and that their peculiar doctrines, and views of experimental religion, and Church order, were dearer to them than life; and that it is these which, for more than one hundred and fifty years, comprehended the religious and moral influence under which New England was formed, and which has made her what she is. Let the children of the Pilgrims never forget this; and let the eulogists of their patriotism cease to spread before our eyes such a glitter of style and eloquence as shall place their civil exploits in the foreground, and throw their doctrines, and Church order, and eminent piety into the background. The religious and moral causes which have blessed New England, and are now rolling the tide of salvation to the west, can never be concealed, and can never be successfully misrepresented. As well may the Newtonian philosophy be concealed as the system of our fathers. It is out, and known, and read of all men.

power of the Spirit, can be arrayed for its preservation. Let the Sabbath-schools, then, and Bible-classes of our land, be multiplied; and let societies for domestic missions rise in every state and district, and collect and pour out the energies of the nation for its moral preservation; while Bibles, and pastors, and teachers are multiplied, till the knowledge of the Lord covers the land, and his saving health is extended to all the people.

4. All Christian denominations are called upon to co-operate for the preservation of religion.

It is idle to expect, and folly to desire, the amalgamation of all denominations into one. The Papal effort at universal comprehension has shown what a vast, unstimulated, stagnant uniformity will accomplish; and God, no doubt, has permitted some varying winds of opinion to move upon the face of our deep, to maintain motion, purity, and life. We may say, however, that jealousies and ambitious collisions between religious denominations should give place to Christian courtesy, and the magnanimity of a hearty co-operation for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. It is vain to expect, and it would be sinful to desire, the extinction of any one denomination of real Christians. There is room for all, and there is work for all; and there is ample reason why each should hail the other as an auxiliary in the work of the Lord. Religious principle must be applied throughout the nation, and no *one* denomination *can* do it. The work demands the ceaseless action of each in its own peculiar way, and the magnanimous co-operation of all for the preservation of the great principles of our common Christianity. Nor will such concert of action be in vain. It will form extensively a public opinion which shall accord with the morality of the Gospel, whose sanctions, expressed in the votes of virtuous freemen, shall elevate to influence and

power men of pure morality, and consign the irreligious, immoral, and dissolute to merited contempt—a law which the wicked cannot repeal, and whose penalty they cannot evade. All denominations united, and directing their suffrages to that end, can check the violation of the Sabbath; can arrest the contagion of intemperance; can punish duellists in high places, who with shameless notoriety set at defiance the laws of God and their country, bringing upon us the contempt of the world, and the just judgments of heaven.

5. In this great work of national preservation and universal good will, our civil rulers are particularly called upon to co-operate; not, as once, in convoking synods, and approving and recommending creeds, and not in coercing by law attendance upon public worship or the support of religious institutions. The day is gone by in which such interposition is required, or can avail. The God of our fathers, having given to us a practical illustration of the efficacy of religious institutions, sustained by law during our minority, now, in our manhood, puts the price into our hands, to be preserved or abandoned spontaneously on our own responsibility. Nor are the Church and the State to be so identified as that the qualifications for civil office must be the same as for membership in that kingdom which is not of this world. Our civil rulers owe to God and their country, now, the same illustrious piety, the same estimation of the doctrines of God's word, the same attendance upon the ordinances of the Gospel and co-operation for their support, and the same strict and pure morality, which rendered the civil fathers of our land so illustrious in their character, and so benign in the power of their example upon their own and upon other generations. The example of men in official stations is the most powerful moral cause which afflicts or blesses a community.

If it be good, it descends with cheering power, like the gentle rain upon the earth; but if it be evil, from its "bad eminence," it comes down upon the community, like the mountain-torrent, sweeping away landmarks: under the sway of bad rulers the righteous mourn, and the wicked creep from their hiding-places and walk on every side, setting their mouth against the heavens, and their foot upon all that is sacred and holy. The time has come when the experiment is to be made, whether the world is to be emancipated and rendered happy, or whether the whole creation shall groan and travail on together in pain until the final consummation; and the example of the rulers of our nation will throw decisive weights into the scales, for or against the world's last hope. If they pour contempt upon the Bible, its doctrines and institutions—if they take in vain the name of God, or profane wantonly his holy day—if they concentrate in the capitol and spread abroad through the land the infection of their bad example—the whole nation will feel it, and die under it, unless the indignant virtue of an insulted community shall throw off the body of death, and, by a well-directed suffrage, call to its aid men of talents and of pure morality.

6. To perpetuate our national prosperity, and hold up our light to the world, our citizens must banish party spirit, and regulate the suffrage of the nation with reference to the preservation of its moral purity.

The temporary collisions of local interest and of ambition can never be excluded from such a nation as this, and are not to be feared. It is those deep-rooted and permanent divisions, extending through the land, rousing the feelings and arraying the energies of one part of the nation in keen collision with the other, and perpetuating prejudice and strife from generation to generation, which

threaten the existence of our republican institutions. Through one such fiery trial we have passed undestroyed, though by no means uninjured; and no patriot of the present generation would willingly, I trust, behold our country placed in such jeopardy again. Despotic governments may pass in safety through popular commotions, such as would shake down the pillars of a republic. The mobs of England, which, in the presence of the military power, are but the gambols of a kid within the scope of the lion's paw, would be, in this country, as the letting out of waters. There is no possibility of freedom in this bad world, without so much intelligence and moral principle among the people as shall create an efficient public sentiment in favour of law and good order. But party spirit prostrates everything within the sphere of its commotion which is venerable and sacred. It directs the attention of the people from their own common interests to the means of gaining objects to which prejudice and passion may direct them, and the attention of the government from the public good to the means of its own perpetuity and ascendancy. It renders a wise and comprehensive policy impossible; for party spirit has no magnanimity, no conscience, no consistency, to withhold it from resisting as readily what is wise as what is unwise; and its victories are too transient to admit of much prospective wisdom. It is eminently hostile to the laws which watch over the morals of the nation; for who will execute them when partisans on both sides fear that they may feel the consequences of fidelity at the next election? Too often, from the nearly balanced state of parties, the most worthless portion of the community actually hold the sway in the elections, even in a state of society comparatively virtuous, occasioning impunity in the violation

of law, and clothing with political consequence, and too often surrounding with adulation, men whom our fathers would have expelled from good society. It tends to destroy in society all distinctions of moral character, talent, and learning, as qualifications for office; while it reconciles the people, upon the plea of necessity, to such preposterous sacrifices of conscience and common-sense as they would never consent to, unstimulated by its madness. Indeed, in all but name, it rears, beneath the forms of freedom, a real and most terrific despotism. For every party has a soul, some master-spirit, who, without a crown and a sceptre, governs with absolute sway. He is surrounded by a nobility, each of whom is commissioned to govern the public opinion within his sphere, and bring his retainers to the polls, to subserve implicitly the interests of the king and of the aristocracy. It needs only to kindle the watch-fire, and every clansman is at his post; and argument might as well avail against bullets in the day of battle as against party spirits in these determined contests. There is no remedy for this state of things but that intelligence which qualifies the people to understand their rights, interests, and duties; and that calmness of feeling to which the public mind, undisturbed by partisan efforts, will not fail to come; and that deep conviction of the importance of moral purity which shall turn the expectations of the people from party men and party measures to the application of moral power, by the institutions of religion and the interposition of the Holy Spirit.

Multitudes of Christians and patriots have long since abandoned party politics, and, not knowing what to do, have almost abandoned the exercise of suffrage. This is wrong. An enlightened and virtuous suffrage may, by system and concentration, become one of the most power-

ful means of promoting national purity and morality, as the suffrage from which the influence of conscience is withdrawn cannot fail to be disastrous. While, then, as freemen, we remove one temptation to hypocrisy by dispensing with a profession of religion as a qualification for office, and exclude all occasions of jealousy by bestowing our votes without reference to Christian denomination, let all Christians and all patriots exercise their rights as electors with an inflexible regard to moral character; and let the duellist, and the Sabbath-breaker, and the drunkard, and the licentious, find the doors of honour barred, and the heights of ambition defended against them by hosts of determined freemen; and the moral effect will be great. The discrimination by suffrage will exert upon the youth of our country a most salutary restraint, and upon dissolute and ambitious men a powerful reforming influence. Let every freeman, then, who would perpetuate the liberty and happiness of his country, and transmit to his descendants of distant generations the precious legacy which our fathers have sent down to us, inquire concerning the candidate for whom he is solicited to vote, Is he an enemy to the Bible, or to the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel? Is he a duellist, or an intemperate man, or a Sabbath-breaker, or dissolute, or dishonest? And if in any of these respects he be disqualified, let him withhold his vote, and give it to a better man; and it will go far to retrieve the declensions which have taken place, and to render righteousness and peace the stability of our times.

And now what shall we say to these things? Are they the dreams of a fervid imagination, or are they the words of truth and soberness? Will our blessings be perpetuated, or shall ours be added to the ruined republics that

have been? Are we assembled to-day to bestow funeral honours upon our departed glory, or with united counsels and hearts to strengthen the things that remain? Weak indeed, must be the faith that wavers now, and sinks amid waves less terrific, and prospects more cheering, than any which our fathers ever saw. Were it dark even as midnight, and did the waves run high, and dash loud and angry around us, still our faith would not be dismayed—still, with our fathers, we would believe, *Qui transtulit sustinet*—and still would we rejoice in the annunciation of Him that sitteth upon the throne, "Behold, I create all things new." Our anchor will not fail, our bark will not founder; for the means of preservation *will* be used, and the God of our fathers *will* make them effectual. The memory of our fathers is becoming more precious. Their institutions are commanding a higher estimation. Deeper convictions are felt of the importance of religion; and more extended and vigorous exertions are made to balance the temptations of prosperity by moral power. Christians are comparatively ceasing from their jealousies and concentrating their energies. The nation is moved, and beginning to enrol itself in various forms of charitable association for the extension of religion at home and abroad. Philosophers and patriots, statesmen and men of wealth, are beginning to feel that it is righteousness only which exalteth a nation, and to give to the work of moral renovation their arguments, the power of their example, and the impulse of their charity. And the people, weary of political collision, are disposed at length to build again those institutions which, in times of contention, they had either neglected or trodden down. Such an array of moral influence as is now comprehended in the great plan of charitable operations was never before

brought to bear upon any nation. It moves onward, attended by fervent supplications, and followed by glorious and unceasing effusions of the Holy Spirit. The god of this world feels the shock of the onset, and has commenced his retreat, and Jesus Christ is pressing onward from conquering to conquer; nor will he turn from his purpose, or cease from his work, until he hath made all things new!

THE END.

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